



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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## THESIS

**POLAND AS A EURO-ATLANTIC POWER:  
THE DETERMINANTS OF U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS  
1989-2005**

by

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December 2005

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THE DETERMINANTS OF U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS 1989-2005**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study treats the evolution of Polish-American security relations since 1989, with special focus on the diplomatic events since 11 September 2001. The study poses the question as to what forces, personalities and events led to the rise of Poland as a power in the transformed Europe of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly as this phenomenon has been visible in US-Polish alliance statecraft. The newly democratic Poland, eager to avoid the fate as in the years from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century until 1945, sought a durable security bond with the United States via Euro-Atlantic structures, as well as integration into what became the European Union. Polish diplomatic and political elites hoped that a formal alliance with the United States would eliminate the vulnerabilities and risks of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The new turmoil of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, poses a great question mark over such statecraft as was evident in the events of diplomacy and alliance cohesion as developed in the years 2002 until 2005. While Poland quickly stepped to the side of the US in the wake of the assaults on the United States, and the strategy of the Bush administration radically to transform Iraq, the protracted war in Iraq and beyond, as well as frictions between the European powers have all exacted a price. Polish diplomacy and alliance statecraft must strike a balance between the demands of its close security partnership with the United States and the rest of its NATO allies, as well as the need to become a valued and effective member of the European Union, despite the latter's setback in the course of 2004 and 2005.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

#### 1. Purpose

What diplomatic and strategic factors account for the rise of the special U.S.-Polish bond since 1989? To determine the factors that shaped U.S.-Polish relations, one must understand the historical dimension of Poland's security dilemma.

In the seventeenth century, Poland conducted several wars with both its external and internal foes that strengthened Poland as a European power, but weakened it politically. The source of instability in this third largest country in contemporary Europe was the involvement of the great powers in Poland's internal power play. Different parties sought support from outside the country for their interests, which critically lessened Poland's military and political might and finally led to its partitioning in 1772, 1793, and 1795. After the end of the Poland-Lithuania Commonwealth in 1795, Poland was reduced geographically to the realm between two great powers, Russia and Germany. For the next two hundred years, Poland was subordinated to their will.

During the short interwar period, 1918-1939, Poland became an uneasy actor among the European powers, as it tried to balance its foreign policy between Russia<sup>1</sup> (later the Soviet Union) and Germany. Nonetheless, its geopolitical location determined that it was to become a victim of the power politics of the neighboring countries.

Parallel to its efforts to heal relations with its neighbors, Poland sought military allies in Great Britain and France. Unfortunately, those allies were unprepared and unwilling to support Poland in 1939, and even less so in 1945. This experience with unreliable European allies is the main factor that influenced Polish foreign policy after the end of the Cold War. Poland chose the United

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<sup>1</sup> During the Russian Civil War, 1917-1921, and until the creation of the Soviet Union on December 30, 1922, the country was still called Russia. See: R. Pipes, *A Concise History of the Russian Revolution*, Knopf, New York, 1995.

States as a guarantor of Polish sovereignty not only because of the Second World War experience, but also primarily because Poles had always perceived the United States as a role model of liberty and independence. Despite the fact that it was the president of the United States who decided to hand over Poland to Stalin at Yalta, there is a persisting opinion among Poles that the United States is Poland's best friend.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Poland would like to seize the opportunity to leverage U.S. support for Poland's return to the European community as a regional power and as an important actor among European decision-makers.

## **2. Significance**

Since 1989, the Polish leadership has sought close ties with Western institutions. This direction in Polish foreign policy became even more important after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, when Poland was left with no formal allies. From 1991 until 2004, Poland's foreign policy has won Poland membership in the leading international organizations and institutions. In addition, the United States forged an increasingly close relationship with Poland. In 1991, when the United States formed a coalition to oust Iraq from Kuwait, Poland was one of the first to answer the U.S. request for support. From then on, U.S. and Polish interests converged, which was an important development for both sides. Some European countries, however, had not anticipated the blossoming U.S.-Polish relationship, which might caused them to postpone or even reject Poland's efforts to become a NATO and an EU member. The situation worsened in 2002-03 when Poland supported the United States in its disputes with certain EU powers over the Iraq question. What were and are the benefits to the United States from such close cooperation with Poland? What will Poland's role be in the future as an EU member? To keep Poland's support, the United States must understand the driving forces behind this distinctive Polish Atlanticism and the objectives of Polish foreign policy.

## **B. U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE**

In his now famous Fourteen Points speech in 1918, President Woodrow Wilson stated clearly for the first time the extent of U.S. strategic interests in

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<sup>2</sup> *Kto Przyjacielem, Kto Wrogiem Polakow?* TNS OBOP, Warsaw, February 2003, pp. 3-5.

Central and Eastern Europe. Wilson realized that people's right to self-determination and international support for that right were essential for the stability of the region. Countries such as Rumania (Romania), Serbia, Montenegro, and Poland should be restored and reconstructed, he said, and the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires should be dismantled to make it possible for nations to gain independence.<sup>3</sup>

Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points outlined U.S. strategic interests in Europe, and in Central and Eastern Europe in particular, which were driven mainly by security considerations. The United States believed that a stable security situation in the region was essential to a more stable Europe and a more stable world. The progressive implementation of the Fourteen Points was expected to eliminate the need for worldwide U.S. military involvement in the future.

The United States raised similar considerations in the 1990s during the debate on NATO enlargement. The supporters of enlargement pointed to three main arguments favoring the accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, first, the development of market economies combined with a development of democratic systems in Central and Eastern Europe would create regional peace and stability. Second, NATO's acceptance of these countries would prevent Germany from taking unilateral action in the region. Third, if there

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<sup>3</sup> "X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development. XI. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into. XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of an autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees. XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant." Fourteen Points Speech of the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, to the Congress (1918). Source: <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/democrac/51.htm> (accessed November 30, 2005).

was a post-1989 security vacuum in Central Europe, it could create an opportunity for a resurgence of Russian imperialism.<sup>4</sup> Other enlargement supporters pointed out that supporting the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in their efforts to join NATO would strengthen pro-American sentiments in those countries, and thus expand the United States' sphere of influence to Russia's doorstep.<sup>5</sup> As this paper will argue, the events of September 11, 2001, showed the correctness of those arguments.

The U.S. strategic interests in Central and Eastern Europe have not changed. Although the Global War on Terrorism changed the enemy, security considerations continue to drive the U.S. strategic interest in this region. But U.S. strategies are not aimed at a specific threat. They are intended rather to shift the collective defense burden onto European shoulders and to foster allies who will give unquestioning support to American military initiatives.

One example of the success of this policy in Central and Eastern Europe is the support of Poland, the largest country in the region, for U.S. military operations. Poland is a U.S. ally in Afghanistan and Iraq and a reliable supporter of U.S. political and military actions on the international stage. Moreover, Poland is a dedicated propagator of U.S. policies in Central and Eastern Europe.

### C. ARGUMENT

Transatlantic relations, NATO, the European Union, and Central European security issues are the subjects of numerous recent publications, including Andrew Michta's *America's New Allies*,<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Simon's *NATO Enlargement and Central Europe*,<sup>7</sup> and Ronald Asmus's *Opening NATO's Door*.<sup>8</sup> These texts

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<sup>4</sup> J. M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether, But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 12.

<sup>5</sup> S. Kay, *NATO Enlargement: Policy, Process, and Implications*. In A. A. Michta, *America's New Allies: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> A. A. Michta, *America's New Allies: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> J. Simon, *Central European Civil-Military Relations and NATO Expansion*. National Defense University, Washington, 1995.

cover a major problematic issue: the integration of post-communist countries into the European and Atlantic security and political structures. They describe the disputes between allies over the *who*, *when*, and *how* of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the role of the United States in this process.

In *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*, Marcin Zaborowski and David Dunn describe Poland's perspective on the new situation in transatlantic and European relations. They detail the tenets of the Polish strategic culture and community, showing Poland's situation during the 1990s.<sup>9</sup>

John Harper, in his *American Visions of Europe*, and Thomas Risse-Kappen, in *Cooperation Among Democracies*, provide background information about U.S. foreign policy and decision making towards Europe. Both authors illustrate the United States' attempts to control Europe through the counterbalancing of rising powers and alliances. Harper even claims that "the United States should therefore promote the 'evolution of the European Community in the direction of a looser, purely economic entity with broader membership rather than tighter political entity with an integrated foreign policy.'"<sup>10</sup> Risse-Kappen's book also lays a theoretical base for explaining U.S.-Polish relations in the realm of international relations.

The major debate about the reasons for a distinctive Polish Atlanticism is being conducted on two levels: Polish public opinion as expressed in the popular media, and academic analysis conducted in scholarly journals and publications. The general populace is upset by such issues as the entanglement of Polish forces in Iraq, U.S. visas for Polish citizens, and lack of economic profit from its support of the United States in the GWOT. The academics are divided into two groups, Atlanticists and Europeanists. The Atlanticists support the Polish government's decisions and its claim that Poland benefits politically from its

<sup>8</sup> R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn, *Poland – A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> J. L. Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 335.

relations with the United States, whereas, Europeanists claim that Poland is being used by America in the European power game, thus repeating a German newspaper charge that Poland is America's "Trojan Donkey,"<sup>11</sup> or agreeing with President Chirac that Poland should follow the common Franco-German vision of a United Europe.

This thesis will answer two major questions: What are the factors that determine the Atlanticist character of the Polish strategic community? and Why should the United States maintain a strong relationship with Poland? This study will argue that, after 1989, influential forces in Poland's domestic politics established elitists groups with strong Atlanticist views, leading to a critical change within the Polish strategic community. The main goal of this study is to answer one overriding question: What factors account for the rise of the special U.S.-Polish relations since 1989?

#### D. OVERVIEW

Chapter II, Security Dilemma, covers the period 1989-99 in U.S.-Polish relations, from Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki's 1990 exposé, to the accession of three new NATO members on March 12, 1999, in Independence, Missouri. This chapter will address two questions: How did Poland construct its national security? and Why did Poland choose the United States as its primary ally? The chapter examines decisions made by the Polish strategic community that led to Poland's support for the United States in its interventions in Iraq (1991 Gulf War), Bosnia, Haiti, and Kosovo.

The third chapter, Strong Partnership, covers U.S.-Polish relations from 1999 to 2003. To exemplify the importance of U.S.-Polish bilateral relations during this period, the chapter will discuss the set of events that changed the nature of American foreign policy. The terrorist attacks on U.S. targets in Africa and Yemen, the attacks on September 11, 2001, Operation Enduring Freedom in

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<sup>11</sup> R. Foroohar, What New Europe? Everyone's Pitting the Established Against the Upstart, But on the Issues That Matter, the Split Doesn't Exist. *Newsweek* (International edition), New York, January 23, 2003, p. 36.

Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, all had a significant impact on U.S. relations with its European allies, particularly Poland.

In the years since September 11, 2001, relations between Poland and the United States have only intensified. There was an increased exchange of military training and the resolution of a dispute over new fighter planes for the Polish Air Forces, together with a huge economic offset. This chapter tries to explain the reasons why the United States has chosen Poland as a primary ally among the “new Europe” states.

The final chapter, Disappointed Friend, covers the period 2003-05. After intensive efforts by the international community to force Iraq to follow the UN resolution on monitoring Iraq’s military and WMD facilities, the United States decided to act unilaterally against Saddam Hussein’s regime. Poland was a member of the “coalition of the willing” that supported the United States. Unfortunately for both Poland and the United States, most of America’s European allies, chief among them France and Germany, were strongly against this campaign. Because these events took place on the eve of Poland’s accession to the EU, they could have resulted in postponement, if not outright cancellation of Poland’s membership. For the United States, they resulted in the loss of strong allies in Europe at a time when transatlantic relations were already in bad condition and when the Global War on Terrorism needed all the support possible.

This chapter tries to explain why the Polish government, despite opposition from parliament and society, decided to join the U.S.-led coalition in Operation Iraqi Freedom and send troops to Iraq. It also tries to delineate Polish reasons for such support for U.S. policy. Finally, this chapter tries to answer the question: Will Poland, as an EU member, remain a strong ally and supporter of U.S. policy.

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## II. SECURITY DILEMMAS 1989-1999

The Roundtable Talks in Warsaw of 1989 started a critical democratic change in the Polish political system. Two months of debates (6 February – 5 April 1989), between communist and opposition representatives in three sub-committees, helped Poland to change its political structure from communism to democracy in a peaceful way.

An agreement was reached on April 5, 1989. The initial settlement ensured the free elections to *Senat* (Upper Chamber of Polish Parliament), the parity representation in *Sejm* (Lower Chamber of Polish Parliament)<sup>12</sup>, and an institution of the President<sup>13</sup>. The free elections in June 1989, to *Senat* were a disaster for communists and overwhelmingly showed who had the support of the people of Poland – the opposition won ninety-nine out of one hundred mandates to the Upper Chamber.<sup>14</sup> It was vivid sign of inevitable transformation of the Eastern Bloc. Despite the great success of the opposition in Poland, there reminded the significant concern about Moscow's attitude toward the transformation. It was only after an unsuccessful attempt (by Nicolae Ceausescu) to consolidate the Warsaw Pact forces to protect communist rule in Poland<sup>15</sup> and a Gorbachev advisor's statement that "the Soviet Union will not intervene in Polish internal affairs,"<sup>16</sup> that these concerns were dismissed.

However, despite the lack of imperial intentions toward Poland from both its traditional enemies – the Soviet Union (later Russia) and Germany – Poland

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<sup>12</sup> In the coming elections to *Sejm*, the sides of the Roundtable Talks agreed to share numbers of mandates as follows: 65% went to communist party and its subordinates (PZPR, ZSL, SD, PZKS, PAX, UChS), 35% went to opposition. A. Albert (W. Roszkowski), *Najnowsza Historia Polski 1914-1993. Vol. 2*. Puls Publications, London, 1994, p. 874.

<sup>13</sup> First President of PRL (People Republic of Poland) after 1989, was elected by the National Assembly (*Sejm* and *Senat* together) by only one vote. A. Albert, *Najnowsza...* p. 893

<sup>14</sup> A. Albert, *Najnowsza...*, pp. 874-876.

<sup>15</sup> A. Albert, *Najnowsza...*, p. 895. Also in W. Kuczynski, Zwierzenia Zausznika. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29 February 1992.

<sup>16</sup> A. Albert, *Najnowsza...*, p. 839. Also in Z. Domaranczyk, *Sto Dni Mazowieckiego*. Warszawa, 1990, p. 18.

found itself in a security vacuum even before the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991. It was assessed that, “the Treaty has already lost its ideological role... it should serve disarmament and cannot impede the unity of the continent.”<sup>17</sup> Considering its violent history, the Warsaw Pact was perceived to be more of a threat than a guarantor of security for its members.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, still within the structures of dying Warsaw Pact and far from gaining membership of any defense oriented organization, Poland started to look for new allies. Taking into consideration the history of the Warsaw Pact and Poland’s experience with its neighbors and European allies, from the very beginning, Poland directed its eyes on the only democratic dominant power in the modern world – the United States.

There were a number of advantages, which helped to sell the idea of the alliance with the United States to the Polish nation. First, is the role of history. Such individuals as generals Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski are both Polish and American heroes. Moreover, it was the American contribution to the victorious side in both world wars, especially the First World War (with President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points), which reincarnated Poland as an independent state. These events are greatly appreciated by Poles and have a special place in their hearts. Second, is the military and economic superiority of the United States in the world. Third, is the Polish Diaspora. Almost 10 million people of Polish origin live in the United States. Finally, Poles have always dreamt the “American Dream” and appreciated the American way of life. In the 1989, during the visit of President George Bush, Poles hoped that Poland could become *America of the East* as a center of prosperity.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Sejm Exposé by Minister for Foreign Affairs of the RP, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, Warsaw, April 26, 1990. *Zbior Dokumentów – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunków Międzynarodowych*. Warsaw, 1990, No 2.

<sup>18</sup> Hungary 1956, Poznań events (Poland) 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, and Polish Crisis 1980-81.

<sup>19</sup> M. Putzel, Walesa Asks U.S. Firms’ Investment; Poland Lowers Business Barriers, Chamber Told. *The Washington Post*, Washington D.C., Mar 23, 1991, p. b01. Also in H. Rainie, To Play on the Field of Dreams. *U.S. News & World Report*; Jul 24, 1989; 107, 4; Research Library p. 18.

These feelings were much stronger than the bitterness of Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam, and President Roosevelt's ambiguous policy toward *the Polish Question* during the WWII.<sup>20</sup>

#### A. AFTER THE END – THE OBJECTIVES OF THE POLISH FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 1989

...When we speak about the reason of state with particular reference to our country, we have to realize that there are certain imponderabilities in the idea. They can be put briefly as those of honor and respect. I mean self-respect and respect for others. Self-respect most certainly implies the imperative to pursue our own external and internal policies in a way that will make us succeed at all times in defending ourselves as effectively as we can against decisions and settlements that external forces may try to impose on us. This posture opens up the way for cooperation with partners who are stronger and for collaboration with those who are smaller.... This is also stance that does not rule out wise compromises, which are pre-eminently the essence of politics, and by the same token it does eliminate false compromises which are always dangerous. If politics is the art of possible, it should also signify the art of being able to attain the objectives set for oneself. For Poland, such objectives must be great ones.<sup>21</sup>

*Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Krzysztof Skubiszewski,  
Address to the Sejm  
Warsaw, January 21, 1993*

In 1989, a geopolitical sense of bipolar reality in the world politics ceased to exist. Several factors accounted for this change. Firstly, the revolutions within Central and Eastern European countries triggered an implosion of the Eastern Bloc that further led to the breakdown of the West – East world system. Secondly, the dissolution of the Soviet Union unbalanced the existing balance of power in the world, leaving the United States as the only world superpower. The consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union were more complex than that. The emergence of the new independent states (former Soviet republics), some of

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<sup>20</sup> J. L. Harper, *American Visions of Europe. Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson*. Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 92-3, 102-4, 119, 127.

<sup>21</sup> What is the Polish Reason of State in the Face of Current Political, Economic and Social Challenges? – Sejm Address by the Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, January 21, 1993.

them with remnants of the Soviet nuclear power on their territories, required revision of the foreign policy and security strategies. Thirdly, the West, in a political sense, was the only institutionalized and organized Bloc remaining on the international stage. Hence, the West was destined to press the progressive reforms in the *new Europe*. Fourthly, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany opened up the case of border regulation. The former Eastern Bloc countries in general, and Poland in particular, were afraid that revisions supported by the only hegemon in the modern world – the United States – might be in favor of Germany. Finally, the reemergence of Central Europe as a geopolitical entity created a dangerous situation for the West. The *new European* countries, among them Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia,<sup>22</sup> demanded that the West take action to assist these democracies in their transition process.

These changes in the international system helped the transformation of domestic politics. In Poland, anticommunist opposition grew stronger, gained access to power, and from then on was strongly influencing the foreign policy of the country. Transformation of the political and economic system from communism and a centralized economy, to democracy and a market economy, together with a strong anticommunist establishment made progress on reforms irreversible.

Polish foreign policy of the early 1990s was preoccupied by redefinition of its role and function in the new post-Cold War environment. This process required answers on several questions, such as: who are Poland's enemies? who are Poland's friends?, what should be the position of a democratic Poland in international politics?, how should Poland deal with the Soviet Union (later Russia and former Soviet republics)?, what are the dangers to Polish national security?

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<sup>22</sup> Later only Czech Republic kept momentum of the integration with the Western institutions. After divorce with Czech Republic, Slovakia failed with political and military reforms, caused by political instability, and could not keep up with requirements imposed by the Western institutions. See J. Simon, *Central European Civil-Military Relations and NATO Expansion*. National Defense University, Washington, 1995, pp. 141-148.

Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Minister for Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski presented, in their exposés, the priorities of Polish foreign policy, when the first non-communist government was formed.<sup>23</sup> The main goal of Polish government in the early 1990s was to restore the full independence of Poland.

Foundation of the foreign policy of our state is the national interest and the Polish reason of state implemented with respect for dictates of morality and for international law....Our policy serves independence. It supports political and economic transformations in Poland and strengthens this country's international position within the new European and international order now being created.<sup>24</sup>

There were nine priorities of Polish foreign policy for the 1990s. First, active participation in creation of a European security system, and in the process of unification of the continent. Second, friendly coexistence with its mighty neighbors – the Soviet Union and Germany. Third, regional cooperation. Fourth, political, economic, and cultural ties with the United States and Western Europe. Fifth, expanding relations with Latin America and non-aligned countries. Sixth, reduction of foreign debt and efficient use of financial aid. Seventh, cooperation with international organizations. Eighth, strengthening of the rule of law in international relations and protection of human rights. Finally, creation of a friendly atmosphere for foreign travel, and assist *Polonia*<sup>25</sup> in contacts with Poland and vice versa.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> First Polish government formed after the Round Table Talks agreements, was still in part communist. Although, in the beginning key ministries were kept by communists, the Prime Minister position was held by former dissident Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Therefore, this government is called the first non-communist Polish government since WWII. See A. Albert, *Najnowsza Historia Polski 1914-1993. Vol. 2*. Puls Publications, London, 1994, p. 895.

<sup>24</sup> Sejm Exposé by Minister for Foreign Affairs of the RP, Krzysztof Skubiszewski. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, April 26, 1990.

<sup>25</sup> The term *Polonia* is used officially in Poland to describe people of Polish descent living outside of Poland – Polish Diaspora (e.g. American *Polonia*). See: *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 11<sup>th</sup> edition*. Merriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Sejm Exposé by Minister for Foreign Affairs of the RP, Krzysztof Skubiszewski. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, April 26, 1990.

The European unity policy remained the main stream in Polish foreign policy throughout 1990s. Consecutive governments were expanding this idea through bilateral and regional ties in the region. Poland became a regional power broker and important international player. Although unity of the continent remained the main goal, every priority mentioned above was subordinated to the supreme aim – restoring full sovereignty.

The problem of the border on the Oder and Neisse line constituted the main issue in bilateral relations with Germany. Therefore, Poland's participation in the “2+4” conference in 1990,<sup>27</sup> was a crucial change in world politics and great achievement of Polish foreign policy. This conference marked the end of an era when great powers decided about the future of smaller countries. It marked the end of the “about us, without us” decisions.

The next step toward full independence was to free Poland from remnants of communist ties, both military and economic. In 1990, Poland was still in the structures of the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. This created a potentially grave danger to the national security. While Poland did not want to be tied to ineffective organizations, she was left her without formal allies after these organizations ceased to exist.<sup>28</sup> Hence, 1990s represented a dangerous situation for Poland's self-sufficiency.

Regional cooperation and relations became very important for Polish foreign policy. Creation of the Visegrad Group – Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary – consolidated efforts of its members more effectively to cooperate with

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<sup>27</sup> Agreement regarding Polish-German border between unified Germany and Poland was signed on November 14, 1990. See A. Albert, *Najnowsza Historia Polski 1914-1993*. Vol. 2. Puls Publications, London, 1994, pp. 896-897.

<sup>28</sup> The Warsaw Pact ceased to exist on July 1, 1991 in Prague, but its military structures were dismantled on February 25, 1991 in Budapest. The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was terminated on June 28, 1991.

NATO and the Western European Union.<sup>29</sup> Pursuing its aim to become an important regional actor in Central Eastern Europe, Poland gained membership in so called “Pentagonal Group,” thereby extending Polish influence to the south of the continent.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, Poland, Germany, and France formed the “Weimar Triangle” in an attempt to overcome historical boundaries. However, this initiative was not very useful for Poland, although it did give Poland an opportunity to express its will and opinions on the broader international forum, and what was more important, an opportunity to be heard and considered.<sup>31</sup>

In this light, Poland of early 1990s considered different options for its future role on the European and international stage. The Polish elites also considered neutrality. However, Poland’s geopolitical location forced the dismissal of any dreams about neutrality. Finally, Polish foreign policy was directed to pursue integration with the Western institutions, namely the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

Due to the fact that the European Union was a relatively young institution which was still in the process of determining its internal composition and because of the weakness of Polish economy, Poland decided to direct all its effort to achieve NATO membership.

## B. THE POLISH PATH TO NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organization was founded on April 4, 1949 as a military alliance of Western European and North American countries. In its first forty years, NATO was a guarantor of security, freedom and independence of its

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<sup>29</sup> Declaration of the Republic of Poland, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, and the Republic of Hungary on Cooperation in Pursuit of European Integration. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Visegrad, February 15, 1991. Also Statement by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the “Triangle States” Concerning Cooperation with the NATO. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Cracow, October 5, 1991.

<sup>30</sup> After accession of Poland to the *Pentagonal Group*, it changed its name to *Hexagonal Group*. In 1992 it changed name to the Central European Initiative (CEI). Source: the Central European Initiative website: <http://www.ceinet.org/main.php?pageID=16>; (Accessed November 27, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> O. Osica, In Search of a New Role: Poland in Euro-Atlantic Relations. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn, *Poland – A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, pp. 25-28.

members. It provided essential strategic balance of power in Europe, and supported both democratic values and institutions. NATO had created stability, which was a critical factor for preventing hostile relations between East and West in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

These events were significant for the Treaty, and enabled reorientation of its policy. Doing this, kept its basic function – to provide security for its members, it also enabled the continuation of building peace in Europe.

Poland – the country in the heart of Europe – has a fundamental role in the process of stabilization and security on the continent. However, decisions made by the powers in the end of World War II, created a situation in which, until 1989, Poland was under the strong influence of the USSR. This situation lasted until the end of 1980s, when revolutionary changes in Central-Eastern Europe, especially Gorbachev's *perestroika* and later dissolution of communist block, allowed Poland to choose its own way of development.

After termination of the Warsaw Pact, Poland was in a situation of forced self-sufficiency – without any formal ally, without any external assurances of its security. Looking for new security model, Poland chose entering the structures of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and West European Union (later European Union) - the pillars of political stability and peace in Europe.

### **1. Poland in New Political-Military Situation**

The policy of *perestroika*, initiated by president of USSR Mikhail Gorbachev in April 1985, accelerated the breakdown of communistic political systems in Central-East Europe. Moscow gave its allies a "free hand" to choose their own way of development. Poland and Hungary were the first nations from the Eastern Bloc to take advantage of this situation, introducing political pluralism in spring of 1989.

The disintegration of the Eastern Bloc was the critical factor which accelerated the evolution of NATO's military and political doctrine. The effect of these changes was an important declaration of NATO members during the NATO summit in London on 5-6 July 1990. It stated that, if former Warsaw Pact's

countries express a willingness to not be recognized as enemies, NATO no longer would recognize them as such.

Meanwhile, on July 3, 1990, with the blessing of world powers, the unification of Germany came true.

In spring of 1991, the military structures of the Warsaw Pact were dismantled, and on July 1, 1991, the leaders of six countries gathered in Prague agreed on the definitive termination of the Pact.

The aftermath of these events, in December of 1991, was collapse of Soviet Union and creation of Russian Federation, and new independent states – former soviet republics. Former enemies now recognized themselves as partners. In consequence of insistent efforts of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, NATO created on 20 December 1991 North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC). Gathering all NATO members and former members of Warsaw Pact, it became consulting body between former enemy's blocks.<sup>32</sup>

Collapse of the Eastern Block did not cause similar processes in the West, because NATO preserved its most important role – guarantor of security of its own members. Indeed, changes in the Central-East Europe lessened its military importance, its political authority increased significantly instead. Furthermore, efforts toward formulation of the new strategy had been undertaken.<sup>33</sup>

In the West, unification of Germany, resulted that Poland became immediate neighbor of NATO, where there still were Soviet military units. Further changes were expected after withdrawing soviet troops from Germany and Poland.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> R. Zięba, New Conditions of Security in Central-Eastern Europe. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 4, p. 92. Also in R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> P. Wieczorek, Premises of Poland's Security in 1990s. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 7, p. 64. Also in R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 16-17.

<sup>34</sup> S. Koziej, Evolution of Poland's Defense Circumstances in 1990s. *Myśl Wojskowa*, 1991, No. 2, p. 25. Also in R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 6-7.

Although, there was no real danger for the national existence, the unstable situation in the East produced some anxieties among Polish citizens. Polish national interests were often in contradiction with policy of Poland's eastern neighbors. In these days, there had not been any real, international, lawful guarantee, accord or agreement affirming security of Poland's external borders.<sup>35</sup>

Poland is a European country powerful enough that, in reality, without approval from Polish society, no country in European continent, would have rational military capabilities to conduct successful and total aggression on our country... However, there is only one condition... this is to retain country's military defense system on adequate level of readiness and proficiency.... There is also need to looking for allies, but only this kind of allies from which we could keep our military autonomy. This goal is attainable only, when the country is militarily enough strong ....<sup>36</sup>

Obviously, that whole Europe is in entirely new situation. However, the degree of changes in the field of security applies particularly to Poland. First of all...we were left without official allies, so without any military assurance from outside, in situation of forced self-sufficient defense. Thereupon, doing calculations, by us – military, we are constrained to rely on our own forces, even if we would like also to consider, in our calculations, reliable allies....<sup>37</sup>

In that situation, the leading issue for Republic of Poland, had been to prepare the country to be part of the European security system, already in transition itself. Few variants were considered: a) neutrality status; b) creation of buffer countries union between NATO and USSR; and c) obviously Poland as a NATO member.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> M. Kowalewski, L. Kościuk, Problems of Military Security of Poland. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 11, p. 82. Also in R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 12-14.

<sup>36</sup> M. Kowalewski, L. Kościuk, Problems of Military Security of Poland. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 11, p. 82. (Translated by the thesis author)

<sup>37</sup> B. Balcerowicz, Problems of Polish Military Strategy. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 12, p. 76. (Translated by the thesis author)

<sup>38</sup> J. Kaczmarek, Problems of Republic of Poland's Security. *Myśl Wojskowa*, 1991, No. 1, p. 19. Also in R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 15-16.

Finally, the option of gaining membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization prevailed, as the Organization was recognized as the main pillar of the political stability and peace in Europe. Playing such important role, it could not neglect threats of international security in Europe. Therefore, it was decided that main strategic goal for Poland in 1990s, was the integration with NATO and Western European Union, which was seen as European pillar of NATO, and critical element of European common security system.<sup>39</sup>

Still, before the creation of common security system in Europe, lack of allied guaranties deprived Poland of any means of collective defense in case of military aggression. In that situation, main effort was put toward foreign affairs, which was to focus on creation of military cooperation with neighbors and NATO countries.<sup>40</sup>

## **2. Efforts to Join NATO**

The post-WWII history of Europe undoubtedly confirms the effectiveness of NATO as a defensive alliance and institution that bond Atlantic countries into political, social, economic, and culture spheres. NATO successfully balanced the military power, and conducted countermeasures to the activity of the USSR on the international stage. It was the factor that guaranteed a persistence of connections binding the United States and Western Europe and anchoring Germany within Western European structures<sup>41</sup>

However, Article X of the Washington Treaty<sup>42</sup> permitted the possibility of its extension, though membership for Poland was unlikely, at least until the end

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<sup>39</sup> L. Wałęsa, Assumptions of Polish Security Policy. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 12, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> P. Wieczorek, Premises of Poland's Security in 1990s. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 7, p. 65.

<sup>41</sup> A. Kalinowski, Between Partnership and Membership. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 6, p. 73.

<sup>42</sup> The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession. Article X of the Washington Treaty. Washington DC, 4 April 1949. In *NATO Handbook*. NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 2001, p. 528.

of the 1990s. Two factors determined this fact: first, the hesitation of NATO-member countries to integrate with post-communistic countries, which resulted from the fear that that move would deepen the feeling of danger and isolation in the USSR. Second, NATO members were afraid of integrating with politically and economically unstable states from Central and Southeastern Europe. Western countries believed that this could force NATO to engage in the internal conflicts of countries from the eastern part of Europe, which would lessen the political and military cohesion of the alliance.<sup>43</sup>

In any case, acceptance of new NATO members was not considered, and a gradual more cordial relations between Poland and NATO was fully understood and accepted. These activities were, in the eyes of Polish leaders, an opportunity to increase Poland's security.

The first official contact between Poland and NATO took place in March 1990 in Brussels when then Polish Ministry of Defense, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, was visiting NATO Headquarters. In July 1990, the president of Poland, Lech Wałęsa, paid a visit to NATO HQ with a similar purpose, and established official diplomatic relations with NATO. These meetings had a significant impact on the further development of a dialog with NATO, which had inaugurated broader cooperation in the political and military spheres.<sup>44</sup>

Relations between Poland and the USSR, which so much worried the West, were expected to be dealt with by the new international agreement, which would govern all issues, especially those regarding economical and technological matters. Nevertheless, those cases depended on development of the situation in the USSR, which was already at the edge of total anarchy, a breakdown of the state structures, and bankruptcy. Even from the Polish point of view and its

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<sup>43</sup> R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, p. 100. Also in P. Wieczorek, Premises of Poland's Security in 1990s. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 7, pp. 64-65.

<sup>44</sup> P. Wieczorek, Premises of Poland's Security in 1990s. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 7, p. 64.

efforts for joining NATO, the case of settling up the relations with the USSR was relevant.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of their looking for guarantees of international security, there was a common view that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would help former Warsaw Pact countries enter European structures, and would consolidate a common European identity. In light of those ideas, the CSCE became the only forum that encompassed various realms of relations between all European countries and relied on a political and legal foundation agreed to by all members of the Conference. Poland, through the CSCE, had an opportunity to consolidate hitherto changes in Europe.<sup>46</sup>

Under the pressure of governmental and academic circles in the West, in the early 1990s, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary inaugurated cooperation within the so-called Visegrad Group.<sup>47</sup> The first meeting of the Group took place in Bratislava in April 1990; it produced no substantial results. Moreover, it seemed that every country wanted to be close to Western Europe in their own way, and alone. However, in autumn of the same year, works under the project of declaration of cooperation within the Visegrad Group were resumed. Thereupon, on February 15, 1991, in Visegrad, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary signed the "Declaration of Cooperation between the Republic of Poland, Czech and Slovak Federation, and Republic of Hungary Aspiring Towards European Integration". This declaration announced their united, harmonious efforts to the foster relations with European institutions, to conduct dialog on security matters, and to develop cooperation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 15, 38-39. Also in P. Wieczorek, Premises of Poland's Security in 1990s. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 7, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> W. Śmiałek, CSCE – The Substructure of Secure Europe? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1991, No. 2-3, pp. 60-62.

<sup>47</sup> J. Rothschild, N. M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity. A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2000, p. 265.

<sup>48</sup> R. Zięba, New Structures of Cooperation of Central-East European Countries. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 5, p .88.

Influenced by the fast changing post-Cold War situation in Europe, NATO policy toward the East had been transformed. On 6-7 June 1991, NATO announced its declaration of “Partnership with Central and East European Countries”, which stated that the security of NATO countries is inseparable from the security of other European countries. The declaration seemed to be an invitation for pro-Atlantic oriented Poland that intensified efforts for its membership in NATO. Nevertheless, the responses on this matter, received from Brussels and capital cities of NATO countries, were biased. In September 1991, then Prime Minister of Poland, Jan Krzysztof Bielecki, was told in Washington that neither NATO membership for Poland nor the provision of a security “umbrella” over Poland (and all Eastern Europe) was yet possible.<sup>49</sup>

Despite another refusal of NATO expansion, relations and cooperation between the organization and Poland increased, especially within the NACC. Such cooperation included consultations, conferences, and seminars regarding security and policy; the exchange of information and experiences regarding socio-economic development and conversion of the defense industry; cooperation programs in the spheres of science, the environment and civil defense; and military cooperation programs and the preparation of joint peace operations.<sup>50</sup>

However, neither NATO nor the former Warsaw Pact countries were satisfied with cooperation only within the NACC. All parties sought new forms of cooperation, which were soon found. During a conference of NATO Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Travemünde (19-21 October 1993), unofficial debate about a new program, a “Partnership for Peace,” took place. This program was to provide security cooperation and joint peace support, and humanitarian, and search and rescue-type (SAR) operations. A couple months later, during the NATO Summit in Brussels (10-11 January 1994), heads of states and governments of member

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<sup>49</sup> R. Zięba, Foreign Policy of Poland during Transformation Process. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1993, No.9, pp. 61-62.

<sup>50</sup> A. Kalinowski, Between Partnership and Membership. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 6, p. 75.

countries agreed on the “Partnership for Peace” program and invited willing partners from the NACC and the CSCE to participate in the program. One result of this Summit was the “General Framework for the Partnership for Peace”.<sup>51</sup>

Although the program was the result of rapprochement by NATO and Central and Eastern European countries, in light of the Washington Accord, cooperation could not exceed beyond the limit placed on real membership and guarantees of protection. Therefore, it was not an acceptance of NATO enlargement, but only an action to expand the spheres of stability and democracy.<sup>52</sup>

The goals of the Partnership for Peace were described in the General Framework:

- achieving transparency in defense planning, especially in the military budget;
- democratic control over armed forces;
- create possibilities for participation in UN and CSCE operations;
- development of military cooperation with NATO, aiming to creation of conditions to joint planning, training and exercising, in order to upgrade countries' capabilities to organize and conduct peace support, SAR, and humanitarian operations;
- long range development of partner countries' armed forces, in order to better preparation for interoperability with NATO members' forces.<sup>53</sup>

Although the PfP program did not fully correspond with Polish foreign policy, Poland decided to cooperate with the program, hoping that achieving interoperability and compatibility with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization would help in Poland's accession to NATO.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> K. Saczonek, J. Maj, Z. Bodo, Military Aspects of “Partnership for Peace”. *Mysł Wojskowa*, 1995, No. 2, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> P. Wieczorek, How far to NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 11, p. 72.

<sup>53</sup> P. Wieczorek, How far to NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 11, p. 73.

<sup>54</sup> P. Wieczorek, How far to NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 11, p. 75.

On February 2, 1994, in Brussels, then Polish Prime Minister, Waldemar Pawlak, signed the General Framework document, ipso facto assuring that Poland joined the PfP program. On April 25, 1994, Poland, as the first country to join, issued a Partnership for Peace Introduction Document expressing Polish intentions to NATO Headquarters:

The Republic of Poland recognizes Partnership for Peace as a sign of NATO engagement in the security of a whole Europe.... Poland intends to achieve full NATO membership. Polish authorities treat the Partnership for Peace initiative as a means to move us closer to achieving this goal, and helping integrate Polish defense structures with corresponding NATO structures, as well as technological, procedural, and structural modernization of our armed forces according to NATO standards....

We are certifying our will to, in good faith, fulfill the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly, to withhold the use of force against the territorial integrity and political sovereignty of any country, and obligate ourselves to respect existing borders, as well as to resolve conflicts in peaceful way....

Poland is ready to deliver forces and means essential to accomplish the Partnership's goals, including peace support operations. The participation of Polish forces in the Partnership for Peace program corresponds with our intention to integrate Polish combat units with NATO structures....

By accepting the Partnership for Peace program, Poland committing itself to cooperation with NATO in order to achieve the goals expressed in the General Framework for Partnership for Peace ...<sup>55</sup>

In May 1994, several negotiations took place regarding the mechanisms of Poland's cooperation with NATO. This led to the development of an Individual Partnership Program (IPP) for Poland. A draft was issued on June 22, 1994. Although it was appreciated by NATO, the ensuing dialog proved to be very complicated because of its innovative nature and the differences in planning procedures. Moreover, Poland wanted to negotiate a document that would

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<sup>55</sup> B. Balcerowicz, Way to NATO or instead of NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 80-81. (Translated by the thesis author)

include Polish priorities: full NATO membership and the compatibility of Polish armed forces with the forces of NATO countries. The final version of Poland's the IPP was ratified on July 5, 1994, during a NATO Permanent Ambassadors Council. Poland was represented by Jerzy Milewski, then the Vice-Minister of Defense, and Robert Mroziewicz, then the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>56</sup>

Enrolling in the IPP was for Poland a crucial aspect in integrating its security policy with NATO structures. Therefore, the economic and political integration processes were enriched by the military sphere. In joining the PfP program, Poland perceived two opportunities: a consolidation of military relations and the achievement of full NATO membership.<sup>57</sup>

NATO HQ's proposals were received in Poland and other aspirant countries with suspicions. Hitherto, discussions over the enlargement strategy, timelines, criteria, and procedures for new members had been recapitulated in the Partnership for Peace offer. It seemed that, through PfP, the organization wanted to show their openness toward all countries, but, at the same time, avoid giving any security guarantees, and therefore, were far from giving any basis for achieving membership. However it was the case in the beginning of the process of integration, from the time perspective it turned to be a means rather than obstacle for gaining membership.

Partnership for Peace was a compromise, which in the eyes of critics was an expedient short of full membership:

- Central-East European countries joined PfP despite the fact that they expected full membership because they thought that other solutions could postpone their accession;
- NATO countries, reluctant to approve enlargement because they feared Russia, but considering new political situation, were forced to respond positively to the Central-East European countries' demands;

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<sup>56</sup> K. Saczonek, J. Maj, Z. Bodo, Military Aspects of "Partnership for Peace". *Myśl Wojskowa*, 1995, No. 2, p. 7.

<sup>57</sup> P. Wieczorek, How far to NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 11, p. 77.

- Russia, which feared isolation, unwillingly accepted the participation of post-communistic bloc countries in PfP (and eventually, Russia also joined the program).<sup>58</sup>

### **3. The Process of Integration with NATO**

The cooperation between Polish armed forces and NATO was hardly a new thing. It was a continuation of commonly executed tasks, during several peace support and humanitarian operations.<sup>59</sup>

Acceptance of the Partnership for Peace program, Poland showed its readiness to cooperate with NATO in the fulfilling the goals expressed in the General Framework.<sup>60</sup> Poland, the first Partnership country, sent its representatives to the Partnership Coordination Cell, a body created by the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium.<sup>61</sup>

During the NATO Summit in December 1994 in Brussels, the organization began to execute the planning and assessment of the Partnership for Peace Process, based on the NATO Defense Planning and Assessment Process pattern. According to the Process, Poland was obligated to gradually adjust its armed forces to NATO requirements, in the fields of equipment, structures, and procedures. In return, the organization started to develop standardization agreements (STANAG).

In 1994, NATO conducted several exercises together with PfP countries, including Polish troops and observers. The first exercise, Cooperative Bridge '94, took place on Polish ground, in Biedrusko. It was the first exercise with both

<sup>58</sup> B. Balcerowicz, Way to NATO or instead of NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1995, No. 2, pp. 79-80.

<sup>59</sup> K. Saczonek, J. Maj, Z. Bodo, Military Aspects of "Partnership for Peace". *Mysl Wojskowa*, 1995, No. 2, p. 5.

<sup>60</sup> P. Wieczorek, How Far to NATO (Partnership for Peace)? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1994, No. 11, p. 75.

<sup>61</sup> A. Kalinowski, Between Partnership and Membership. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 6, p. 74.

NATO and former Warsaw Pact soldiers and became a symbol for reconciliation and breaking anticipation between them.<sup>62</sup>

Each month advanced such cooperation. Parallel to its relations with NATO headquarters, Poland established bilateral relations with NATO countries that involved military exercises in the Partnership spirit, consultations between experts, cooperation in the sphere of military technology, an exchange of delegations; seminars, and conferences, and training.

On August 18, 1995, Ministries of Defense from Poland, Germany, and Denmark, signed an agreement that initiated relations among these countries concerning European security issues and mutual initiatives within the PfP.<sup>63</sup>

The Polish contingent's involvement in former Yugoslavia proved decisive. In the years 1992-95, Poland maintained an operational battalion in this region that was part of the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR). After the end of the conflict and the signing in Paris, on December 14, 1995, of the peace accord on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN Security Council issued a resolution authorizing NATO to implement the military aspect of the Paris Accord under the Chapter 7 of the UN Charter. This document authorizes the conducting peacekeeping operations, and necessary peace enforcement. For that purpose so-called Implementation Forces (IFOR) subordinated to NATO Command were organized. The IFOR consisted of military contingents from both NATO and PfP countries.<sup>64</sup>

Poland decided to prepare its forces for joining IFOR. Therefore, on November 6, 1995, the Polish government handed a letter to the NATO Deputy Secretary General that stated Poland's readiness to participate in the mission. The legal base for sending Polish troops abroad was the resolution of Polish

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<sup>62</sup> A. Kalinowski, Between Partnership and Membership. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 6, p. 76.

<sup>63</sup> F. Gagor, K. Paszkowski, To NATO Through Military Cooperation. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1997, No. 3, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> R. Krupiecki, NATO in Peacekeeping operations. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 12, p. 96.

Council of Ministries, on December 5, 1995, concerned about creation of Polish military contingent within IFOR in Bosnia.<sup>65</sup> Under authorization of this law, an official confirmation letter was sent to NATO HQ accepting NATO's invitation to participate in Operation Joint Endeavour, which was an implementation of the Dayton peace accord on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The core element of the armed forces contingent sent by Poland was the 16<sup>th</sup> Airborne Battalion. This unit was the first Polish combat unit to participate in a peace support operation, and the first to participate in a peace enforcement operation. Considering the fact of Poland's efforts to join NATO, it was a practical exercise showing Poland's capabilities and its readiness to cooperate within NATO structures.

In December 1995, the battalion reached its intended goal, it was ready to project its forces into the area of operation within thirty days. On February 5, 1996, the Polish battalion had begun its service within the Nordic Brigade, together with Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland.<sup>66</sup>

The result of the military effort in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the political stabilization of the region. Thereupon, the UN Security Council issued a new resolution appointing Stabilization Forces (SFOR), which after December 20, 1996, replaced the Implementation Forces. Once again, under the authorization of a Council of Ministers resolution dated December 17, 1996, the Minister of Defense issued an order for the formation of a Polish military contingent within SFOR.<sup>67</sup>

Besides operations in the former Yugoslavia in 1996 and 1997, Polish units were participating in other NATO/PfP exercises. Among them was the Cooperative Guard 96/97, organized by the Commander-in-Chief (CINC) of SHAPE, from June 1996 to May 1997. Its main purpose was to prepare a

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<sup>65</sup> Komunikat po Radzie Ministrów – 05.12.1995. Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Warsaw, 1995. [http://www.kprm.gov.pl/1937\\_3423.htm](http://www.kprm.gov.pl/1937_3423.htm) (Accessed November 22, 2005)

<sup>66</sup> C. Marcinkowski, Dayton Peace Accord. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 2, p. 100.

<sup>67</sup> C. Marcinkowski, Dayton Peace Accord. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1992, No. 2, p. 101.

multinational staff to plan and conduct peace support operations under the NATO command.

One of the aspects of cooperation between Poland and NATO is participation in exercises and training. In the beginning, it was at the platoon and company level. However, our leadership demanded an extension of the cooperation and participation of officers in staff training and exercises at the tactical and strategic level.<sup>68</sup>

An important issue during the preparation for multinational exercises was the status of the foreign forces staying within the borders of PfP countries. Among NATO countries, however, it was not an issue to worry about, because the NATO Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) regulated these matters. But it was a different situation when countries outside of NATO were involved. They could not be treated in the same manner. Thereupon, in June 1995, NATO HQ prepared a PfP Status of Forces Agreement (PfP SOFA) on similar standards as NATO SOFA. Poland ratified this agreement in January 1997, after the necessary adjustments and changes were made in the Polish legal system.<sup>69</sup>

#### **4. Poland Enters the North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

The year 1995 was decisive in Poland's efforts to gain NATO membership. In September, Brussels released its Study on NATO Enlargement,<sup>70</sup> which described NATO's role in the new architecture of European security, pointing out the ways NATO was involved in international efforts for stability and security.<sup>71</sup> This document expressed the position agreed to by member countries toward NATO enlargement.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> T. Jędrzejczak, Allignment. *Polska Zbrojna*, 1997, No. 10, p. 32. (Translated by the thesis author)

<sup>69</sup> F. Gągor, K. Paszkowski, To NATO through Military Cooperation. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1997, No. 3, p. 98.

<sup>70</sup> See: *NATO Basic Texts*. <http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/enl-9501.htm> (Accessed November 27, 2005).

<sup>71</sup> R. Krupiecki, NATO in Peacekeeping operations. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 12, p. 96.

<sup>72</sup> J. Stańczyk, Poland in NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 4, p. 118.

An important element of the NATO study was the procedure for new members' accession. At first, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) had to come up with an initiative of enlargement, to enable the acceptance of new members from the countries that expressed a desire to join NATO. Next, the Secretary General, under the Council's authorization, would inform a particular country that the Organization was considering its application. Then, pre-accession negotiations could start, which would result in an accession protocol. After NATO-member countries' parliaments would ratify decisions regarding a particular candidate, the country had to be sent an official invitation to become a member. The final step for full membership was a deposition of the accession document to the NATO depository country, United States.<sup>73</sup>

The individual dialog with NATO HQ Poland had begun in the spring of 1996. Like other countries aspiring to NATO, Poland was asked to prepare Discussion Papers that presented its view about the arguments included in the Study on NATO Enlargement, which was the basis for further discussion and consultation. The Polish Individual Discussion Paper about NATO Enlargement, was sent to NATO Headquarters in April 1996.<sup>74</sup>

That document consisted of arguments for NATO enlargement, pointing out capabilities of Poland for strengthening the Organization. Moreover, it described how much Poland already fulfilled membership requirements. It ascertained that Poland agreed to intensive and individual dialog with NATO and approved the rules of enlargement in the NATO study. Thus, Poland, in effect, declared its willingness to accept an active partnership in the creation of a European security community and agreed to build a European area of stability and cooperation, based on NATO.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> J. Stańczyk, Poland in NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 4, p. 118.

<sup>74</sup> M. Nowakowski, Dialog between Poland and NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 8, p. 92.

<sup>75</sup> M. Nowakowski, Dialog between Poland and NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1996, No. 8, p. 93.

The Polish document was rated very high, which created a strong basis for an extended dialog with NATO. And an effectively conducted dialog could give a huge boost to the integration process ahead, even before the official Summit that would designate the countries that would be invited to an official accession discussion.<sup>76</sup>

On 10-11 December 1996, a meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs from NATO-member countries took place in Brussels. After a session of talks, they announced that in July 1997 one or a few countries would be invited to begin accession discussions with NATO. During the meeting members expressed their request that the first stage of NATO enlargement would be finished no later than spring 1999, and that the process would then continue beyond 1999. In an unofficial statement, they said that Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, or even Romania and Slovenia, would be invited for negotiations.<sup>77</sup>

The announcement stated that there was no need to install nuclear weapons on new members' territory (an effect of Russia's pressure). Although, Poland had never demanded such actions on its territory, this was considered because of security guaranties for Poland.<sup>78</sup>

In February 1997, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright presented timelines for NATO's enlargement, together with propositions for Russia regarding issues about NATO's policy toward the East. A given timetable provided certain deadlines for the following actions: an invitation to the negotiations, ratification of the agreement on NATO enlargement by member-countries' parliaments, and issuance of an official announcement about new members' accession.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> R. Kurpiecki, December Summit in Brussels. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1997, No. 1, p. 93.

<sup>77</sup> J. M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether, But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 118. Also in: P. Kłudka, Invitation in July? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1997, No. 1, p. 91.

<sup>78</sup> P. Kłudka, Invitation in July? *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1997, No. 1, p. 92.

<sup>79</sup> J. Stańczyk, Poland in NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 4, p. 119.

On 8-9 July 1997 in Madrid, NATO invited to accession negotiations the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. Now the official preparation period had begun. On August 1, 1997, the lower chamber of the Polish Parliament (Sejm) enacted a bill authorizing the government to start the accession dialog, and to obligate them to assure NATO about Poland's will to fulfill obligations and accept costs necessary as a consequence of membership.<sup>80</sup>

On July 11, 1997, the Polish National Defense Committee appointed a negotiating team to conduct accessing talks. During the two months of negotiations (September – October 1997), NATO representatives were assured, that Poland (as declared earlier) wished and was able to accept any political, military, and financial commitments corresponding with NATO membership.<sup>81</sup>

In the middle of 1997, Poland sent its Defense Planning Questionnaire (DPQ) to NATO headquarters.<sup>82</sup> This was a classified document, dated December 31, 1996 that consisted of complete information about the Polish armed forces and defense system of Poland, and, based on an armed forces development project, a prognosis up to the year 2002. The DPQ is one of the most important documents in NATO: it enables members to present real data about their armed forces and development. The DPQ consists of three main parts: a memorandum, a three-part section (a land, air and naval component), and a financial section.<sup>83</sup>

On September 24, 1997, the North Atlantic Council invited the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to participate in regular work within NATO structures.

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<sup>80</sup> J. Stańczyk, Poland in NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 4, p. 119.

<sup>81</sup> Z. Wójcik, E. Rokicki, Questionnaire of Truth. *Polska Zbrojna*, 1997, No. 37, pp. 16-17.

<sup>82</sup> For more information see: G. von Moltke, Accession of new members to the Alliance: What are the next steps? *NATO Review*, No. 4, July-August 1997, vol. 45, pp. 49. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9704-2.htm> (Accessed November 27, 2005).

<sup>83</sup> R. Krupiecki, B. Pękasa-Krawiec, Permanence and Change. Relations Poland-NATO in 1997. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1998, No. 1, pp. 104-106.

In November 1997, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, sent the NATO Secretary General a letter expressing Poland's desire to join NATO and accepting all the responsibilities that were a consequence of membership. That accomplished the official accession debate.<sup>84</sup>

On December 16, 1997 in Brussels, members of NATO's North Atlantic Council agreed on the protocol for inviting Poland to the Washington Treaty.<sup>85</sup>

During the accession dialogue, Poland was officially informed about the possibility of its participation in the daily NATO task and missions. Beginning in January 1998, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary would take part in most meetings of the Permanent Representatives Council, including the Military Committee. They could not take part in some of the allied meetings, such as the Nuclear Planning Team and the NATO Committee on Cooperation with Russia and Ukraine. The invited countries were officially informed during meetings of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council about the results of NATO meetings with Russia.<sup>86</sup>

Although they had some concerns about NATO's enlargement, all sixteen members kindly agreed on the accession of the three new members. Poland's efforts were supported on the international arena. Poland conducted intensive activity to gain sympathy and support in its aspirations for NATO membership. Its main efforts involved the defense system, especially the Polish armed forces, in an adjustment of procedures and structures, the introduction of STANAG, and participation in the PfP program and the peace support operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>87</sup>

At the end of 1998, the new members had all finished the Accession Protocol ratification process by the members. All their parliaments agreed. An

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<sup>84</sup> B. Pękasa-Krawiec, R. Krupiecki, Ratification of Accession Protocols in NATO Countries. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1998, No. 3, pp. 108-109.

<sup>85</sup> A. Mędykowski, Backdoor Entrance. *Polska Zbrojna*, 1997, No. 41, p. 30.

<sup>86</sup> B. Pękasa-Krawiec, R. Krupiecki, Ratification of Accession Protocols in NATO Countries. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1998 No. 3, pp. 109-110.

<sup>87</sup> J. Stańczyk, Poland in NATO. *Wojsko i Wychowanie*, 1999, No. 4, p. 119.

important milestone was the acceptance of the Protocol by the U.S. Senate, fostering good climate for ratification by other countries.<sup>88</sup>

On January 29, 1999, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana had sent a letter to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bronislaw Geremek, in which he officially invited Poland to join NATO. As soon as Poland replied to that invitation to the U.S. State Department, would be the moment that Poland would become an official NATO member. On February 17, 1999, the signature of the President of the Republic of Poland accomplished the Washington Treaty ratification procedure by Poland. At the moment of handing over this document to the treaty depository, the U.S. State Department (12 March 1999), the Republic of Poland became the NATO member.<sup>89</sup>

### C. CONCLUSIONS

The Round Table Talks sparked enthusiasm within Polish society. Poland was a leading country in Central and Eastern Europe in the overthrowing of communism. There were great expectations, dreams, and prospects for the future of a fully independent Poland. The opposition was sure that the mere fact of overthrowing communism would itself solve all of Poland's problems. The existing opinion was that grateful Western countries and institutions would embrace the tired victor and fix the economic and political problems, and would promptly provide it with the necessary security guaranties. Therefore, political elites felt there was no need for a plausible plan of reform.

Only a handful of politicians and academics realized the difficulties of Poland's situation. They understood that their country needed to fix its problems by itself. Poland received some economic and political assistance. However, the assistance was conditional. The Western financial institutions remembered the situation in the 1970s, when the Polish communist government of Edward Gierek borrowed enormous amounts of money that was loaned without real obligations.

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<sup>88</sup> J. M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether, But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO*. Brookings Institution Press, Washington D.C., 1999, p. 108.

<sup>89</sup> T. Wróbel, Strength of the Treaty. *Polska Zbrojna*, 1999, No. 11, p. 3. (Translated by the thesis author)

International lending institutions did not want to repeat these mistakes. After the Gierek's fiasco, monetary assistance would have strings attached.

With the emergence of a democratic system in Poland engendered the problem of security guarantees. An independent Poland could not rely on the communist structures such as the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. Hence, different options were necessary to solve Poland's security dilemmas. The range of solution stretched from neutrality to association with different military structures.

Considering Poland's geostrategic location – the source of threats to Polish security in the past – neutrality was not an option. Eventually, the "Western option" prevailed as the only one relevant and possible at the time. The integration with the Western institutions was set as a primary target of Polish foreign policy in the 1990s.

Poland's primary goal was prompt integration with the European Union. However, this would be an arduous, long-term process. Integration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was easier to attain. By its integration with the European Union Poland could achieve a long awaited prosperity, while integration with NATO military structures would realize its dream of restoring Poland as a European power (similar to that of seventeen century).

Parallel to the Western orientation in Polish foreign policy, there was also the challenge of conducting a fair Eastern policy. After 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, that was even more difficult task. From then on, there were several independent actors instead of one. This priority of Polish foreign policy was a result of both political and economic factors. Most of Poland's strategic resources come from Russia. Another aspect of the Eastern orientation stemmed from the persistent view of Western governments that Russia could divert from its path of democratic reforms if the West insisted on NATO or EU expansion to include Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, Poland sought healthy relations with its powerful neighbor in order to create an environment conducive to NATO's eastward expansion. Although Poland's great effort to assure Russia that

expansion would not be a hostile act against Russia, it was the Clinton administration that solved the problem and gained Russia's approval for the expansion.<sup>90</sup>

Almost ten years after Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary had overthrown communism in Central and Eastern Europe, and after ten years of difficult reforms, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization invited these countries to become members of the most successful military alliance in history. This act ended the so-called Yalta order in Europe.

For Poland, however, it was not the end of the integration process: the priority of EU integration was yet not fulfilled. However, by achieving NATO accession, Poland had the security guaranties necessary to realize its next priority – a consolidation of power in the region.

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<sup>90</sup> In 1997, NATO and Russia signed NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council to overcome Russia's concerns about Eastern NATO enlargement. See K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 125. Also in: R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 198-200. In 2002, during the Rome Summit, the Council changed the name forming NATO-Russia Council (NRC). See <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p020528e.htm> (Accessed November 27, 2005).

### **III. STRONG PARTNERSHIP, 1999-2003**

March 12, 1999, was a day of great accomplishment for Poland. After nine years of negotiations and efforts, the Polish national flag rose in front of the NATO Headquarters in Brussels. Polish foreign policy achieved the goal set for 1990s.

The main driver of Polish foreign policy during the process of negotiation with NATO was the desire to become America's closest European ally, and by accession to the Alliance, Poland achieved this goal.<sup>91</sup>

The timing of the accession was significant. Less than two weeks after the accession ceremony, NATO was ready to wage its first war ever. Unlike some of the members of the Alliance, Poland did not hesitate to support NATO's war effort. Poland supported this action politically and militarily, even beyond its capabilities. Poland, as a new member of the Atlantic community, did not support the United States in words only. Although the Polish Armed Forces could not support air campaign because of the lack of appropriate equipment, they dispatched ground forces to Macedonia and Albania, and later to Kosovo.<sup>92</sup>

Unlike the other new members, Poland showed that it was a reliable partner willing to fulfill the obligations thrust upon it. Moreover, by its robust contribution to the Organization and support of the U.S. actions Poland exhibited its pro-Americanism. Within Polish strategic community prevailed the view that the best for Poland would be the close ties with the United States. These views could be best illustrated by paraphrasing Dean Acheson and Elizabeth Pond that "...the hope of Poland lies in the strength and will of the United States...and in its good judgment as well."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> O. Osica, In Search of a New Role: Poland in Euro-Atlantic Relations. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, pp. 22-23.

<sup>92</sup> A. A. Michta, *America's New Allies. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in NATO*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999, pp. 196-197.

<sup>93</sup> E. Pond, *Friendly Fire. The Near-Death of the Transatlantic Alliance*. Brookings/EUSA, Washington, DC, 2004, p. 96.

Tying itself to the United States was seen as a great chance to leverage Poland's position on the European and international political stage. Moreover, becoming America's close ally solved Poland's historical security dilemma.

By 1999, Poland had already reconsidered its role in international politics. Using U.S. support, Poland strove for the position of the new power broker in Central and Eastern Europe. However Poland's leaders understood that the position of the country was based mainly upon its relations with the other countries in the region. They also understood that "the power of the state and the security of its citizens cannot be built today only on the basis of a military alliance. The foundation of the country is a modern economy, an effective social security system and a conspicuous presence on the great European market."<sup>94</sup>

Therefore, from the beginning of its independence, Poland was enhancing economic and cultural ties, while concurrently promoting freedom and human rights in Central and Eastern Europe. Even before Poland joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it entangled itself into different bilateral relations with its neighbors both creating new international groups and joining already existing ones. Organizations such as the Pentagonal Group<sup>95</sup>, Weimar Triangle, Council of the Baltic Sea States, and Visegrad Group, to name only few, served Poland's aspirations to become a regional power, as well as solved, in some extent, Poland's security dilemma.

This chapter examines the two aspects that shaped U.S.-Polish relations. From 1999-2003 there are two main aspects to the U.S.-Polish relationship. First, the emergence of Poland as a new power in Europe. And second, the Global War on Terrorism, and its implications for Poland's relations with the United States. These two issues would help to explain the reasons for the development of a distinctive Polish Atlanticism, and will help to explain the determinants of this

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<sup>94</sup> "Poland's Integration with the European Union" – Address by Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Jerzy Buzek to the Diet, September 8, 1999. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, 1999.

<sup>95</sup> After Poland's accession, the organization changed its name to the Hexagonal Group. Currently the Central European Initiative.

trend in Polish security policy during such an important period for transatlantic relations.

#### A. POLAND – A NEW POWER IN EUROPE

Poland's aspirations to become a new regional power in Central and Eastern Europe are very strong among the Polish strategic community and stems from its post-WWII experiences.<sup>96</sup> However, it should not be forgotten that these ambitions have even deeper roots.

Poland has a long history as a regional power. As the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, it stretched its territory from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea, both connecting and defending Western Europe from Eastern influences such as Genghis Khan, the Ottoman Empire, and Communism of the Soviet Union. Those challenges forged Poland as a vital element of the European civilization throughout centuries.

Events in Polish history, such as the victory over Teutonic knights in the Battle of Grunwald in 1410, the Succor of Vienna in 1683 by Polish King Jan III Sobieski, and the defeat of the Red Army in the Polish-Soviet War of 1920-1921 always reinforced the myth of greatness among Poles. Hence, the idea of Poland as a new regional power in the twenty-first century was easy to sell to Polish society.

In 1999, Poland had the historical opportunity to seize an important role in transatlantic relations. Finally, Poland did not need to worry about the security of its borders. Second, it had powerful and reliable allies. However, some were still unwilling to “die for Gdansk,” they would only help Poland when necessary. The then Prime Minister of Poland, Jerzy Buzek, in his address to the Polish Diet best expressed the relief felt by Poles upon Poland's accession to NATO:

The history of Poles of the last two centuries is a hard history, the history of nation subjected many times to extreme trials. We had few moments of respite, hardly any periods of secure development. However, today, ten years after the Polish state regained its

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<sup>96</sup> O. Osica, In Search of a New Role: Poland in Euro-Atlantic Relations. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, pp. 25-26.

sovereignty, we can say: Never before has the international situation been so favourable for us. This is so because Poland is regaining its place in the family of free European nations. Besides, this is hardly anything new. Long ago Adam Mickiewicz said that “the stronger Poland felt and shared the family feelings of Europe, the happier and more glorious it was; the more it separated itself from Europe, the more visible its weakness became....” The Republic of Poland is already a member of the North Atlantic Alliance. We have obtained real security guarantees.... By entering NATO we became stronger thanks to the fact that we agreed to abide by the rules in effect in a large international organization that protects its members. Mutual obligations also mean mutual guarantees.<sup>97</sup>

Moreover, Poland achieved the status of an ally and a friend to the strongest member of the Atlantic Community, the dominant power in the contemporary world, the United States.

From then on, at every opportunity, the presidents of the Poland’s new *mentor* have expressed their appreciation of Poland’s support and close relations. In 1999, the President of the United States William J. Clinton in his letter to the President of Poland wrote, “I am proud that Poland is our ally for a more stable and secure Europe, that Poland is our partner for democracy and prosperity, and that the people of our two nations are lasting friends.”<sup>98</sup>

In 2001, newly elected President of the United States, George W. Bush, while visiting Poland went even further blessing Poland as a regional power and the United States’ most important ally in Central Europe. He said, “I want to thank Poland for acting as a bridge to the new democracies of Europe, and a champion of the interests and security of [its] neighbors, such as the Baltic States, Ukraine,

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<sup>97</sup> “Poland’s Integration with the European Union” – Address by Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Jerzy Buzek to the Diet, September 8, 1999. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, 1999.

<sup>98</sup> Letter of the President of the United States, William J. Clinton, to the President of the Republic of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of Outbreak of the Second World War, August 31, 1999. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, 1999.

and Slovakia.... Poland, in so many ways, is a symbol of renewal and common purpose.”<sup>99</sup>

For the United States, Poland was the ideal reason to push NATO enlargement further to the East. Poland’s successful adaptation to the new role as a NATO member and reforms of the military sector were received in Washington with great appreciation, giving those who first fiercely supported enlargement a strong argument to proceed further. Prompt response for the NATO’s call during the war in Kosovo showed Poland’s dedication to the Alliance. From then on, the United States considered Poland as a model ally and the regional leader of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>100</sup>

### **1. Relations with Russia and Ukraine**

Another aspect of Poland’s leadership in the region was its relations with its neighbors, particularly with Russia and Ukraine. Where the former strongly opposed Poland’s accession to NATO, and the latter, traditionally anti-Polish, had substantial military force to challenge any Polish attempts to gain regional power status. Therefore, a carefully conducted foreign policy toward these countries was critical.

Relations with Russia were (and still are) very important for the new Polish foreign policy for a number of reasons. First, Russia was still an important actor on the international stage, which was revealed during the pre-enlargement negotiations, when Russia emphatically vetoed inclusion of Poland into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Although, Russia was still the power that mattered, it became clear that she could not stop the process.<sup>101</sup> Russia involuntarily became the engine of the second NATO enlargement. Overcoming Russia’s fierce opposition to the first found of enlargement, together with Poland’s

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<sup>99</sup> ‘No More Munichs. No More Yaltas – Lift Up Your Hearts.’ Address of the President George W. Bush to Faculty and Students of Warsaw University – June 15, 2001. Embassy of the United States in Warsaw, Poland.

<sup>100</sup> D. H. Dunn, Poland: America’s New Model Ally. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 70.

<sup>101</sup> M. K. Albright, Stop Worrying About Russia. *The New York Times*. New York, Apr 29, 1998, p. A.25.

successful adaptation to its new role in transatlantic security was the top priority of Washington's pro-enlargement elites, and gave them a strong argument for the second round of enlargement.<sup>102</sup>

Second, Russia was one of the main factors pushing Poland toward the United States. Traditional fear of Russian imperialism among Poles combined with a fear of possible rebirth of Russian territorial aspirations in the Central and Eastern Europe caused unequivocal and unquestionable acceptance of dependence from the United States among Polish security community.<sup>103</sup>

Third, Russia began establishing closer ties with Western countries, and with the United States in particular. Russia was looking for both economic support for its devastated economy after the collapse of the Ruble in 1998,<sup>104</sup> and political support, especially for its war in Chechnya. Here Poland, knowing the realities of the region and having strong relations with countries within the region, could play an important role as a tool of NATO and the EU Eastern policy. Poland could serve as a bridge between those former enemy blocks.

Relations between Poland and Russia worsened after the first NATO enlargement, when three former communist countries entered the Atlantic Alliance. The historical burden of their mutual relations mixed with the lack of flexibility of both actors and the new situation in international politics after September 11 led to tensions and vivid confrontation between Poland and Russia. The fault was on both sides.

Poland, as a NATO member felt much more comfortable and more confident on international stage. Poland tried to use its new powerful ally, the United States, to exercise pressure on Russia as hereditary of the Soviet Union,

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<sup>102</sup> D. H. Dunn, Poland: America's New Model Ally. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 70.

<sup>103</sup> C. Bobinski, Polish Illusions and Reality. In A. Lieven, D. Trenin, *Ambivalent Neighbors. The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2003, p. 240.

<sup>104</sup> B. Powell, Russian Roulette. *Newsweek*, New York, Sept 7, 1998, Vol. 132, Iss. 10, p. 26.

to take responsibility for injustice of the Soviet era.<sup>105</sup> Poland demanded that Russia take the blame for the Soviet invasion of September 17, 1939, and the crimes that followed. Poland demanded release of classified NKVD files regarding Polish citizens held in captivity after the invasion. The most important issue was the case of Katyn, where Polish officers and intelligentsia were murdered by the Soviet secret police.<sup>106</sup>

Poland achieved relative success dealing with the Katyn issues. Russia allowed a commission consisting of Polish historians limited access to the restricted files of the investigation into the case of Polish officers kept in captivity in the Soviet Union after September 17, 1939.<sup>107</sup> Poland's relations with Russia improved because Russia aware of its condition and internal problems (i.e. Chechnya and economic crush), needed all possible support, and could not afford to jeopardize its relations with the Western World at that time.

The change of this situation came with the events of September 11, 2001. The new war on terrorism required new means, new strategy, and new allies. The new U.S. allies were mainly from outside of the Atlantic Alliance. Among them Russia emerged as a primary ally in the war on terrorism. This was seen in Poland as a potential threat.<sup>108</sup>

Although Poland was usually neglected in the relations between the United States and Russia, and between NATO and Russia, it achieved the status of an expert on Central and Eastern Europe among NATO members, especially

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<sup>105</sup> C. Bobinski, Polish Illusions and Reality. In A. Lieven, D. Trenin, *Ambivalent Neighbors. The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2003, pp. 240-41.

<sup>106</sup> J. Rothschild, N. M. Wingfield, *Return to Diversity. A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II*. Oxford University Press, New York. 2000, p. 28.

<sup>107</sup> Poland to Get Access to Russian Files on Katyn. *News Bulletins*. Embassy of the Republic of Poland, Washington D.C. [http://www.polandembassy.org/News/Biuletyny\\_news/News\\_2004/p2004-08-05.htm](http://www.polandembassy.org/News/Biuletyny_news/News_2004/p2004-08-05.htm), (Accessed 21 November 2005).

<sup>108</sup> For further information on the issue see: O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 129-130.

the United States. From then on, Poland's views were considered before any policy was pursued toward such Eastern European countries as Ukraine.<sup>109</sup>

Poland became an very important player in relations between NATO, EU, and Ukraine. It was even more important for the United States regarding this issue. Heavily involved in Ukraine and very pro-American, Poland was the best tool to be used by U.S. administration toward Ukraine. Furthermore, the establishment of the Polish American Ukraine Cooperation Initiative in 1999 was a clear sign of U.S. confidence in Polish foreign policy. The Initiative is an intergovernmental institution that uses Polish knowledge and assessment to help direct U.S. economic assistance to the Ukraine.<sup>110</sup>

## **2. European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) and Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)**

Additional indicators of Poland's Atlanticist orientation were shown during the debates over the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and the European Defense and Security Policy (ESDP).

Poland's approach to ESDP was consistent with that of the United States.<sup>111</sup> In other words, Poland was against the new ESDP which challenged the United States' role and presence in Europe. Poland feared ESDP would lead to the withdrawal of the United States from Europe, and brings back the kind of insecurity felt during the interwar years.<sup>112</sup>

Poland felt that building European rapid reaction forces could give more power to the leading European countries, such as France and Germany, which could lead to a weakening of NATO's role in the European security structure.

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<sup>109</sup> D. H. Dunn, Poland: America's New Model Ally. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 71.

<sup>110</sup> D. H. Dunn, Poland: America's New Model Ally. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 71.

<sup>111</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 125-127.

<sup>112</sup> M. Zaborowski, From America's Protégé to Constructive European. Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century. *Occasional Papers*, No. 56, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2004, p. 17.

Furthermore, Poland feared that a decreased NATO role and U.S. withdrawal from Europe might cause Russia to exert stronger influence on European security. Additionally, vague formulation of the conditions and exclusion of non-EU NATO members from security decision-making process, caused concern in Warsaw.<sup>113</sup>

Regarding the BMD issue, Poland was initially not interested in the new anti-missile defense idea. Additionally, conflict between Europe and the United States over the issue of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which was later rejected by the United States was not a good sign for Poles. Thus, Poland was trying to avoid hasty decisions about the issue.<sup>114</sup>

Despite the early hesitation, Poland was ready to support any development of the anti-missile shield encompassing her territory. Moreover, Poland was ready to host any element of the system on its soil.<sup>115</sup> This decision was a result of the political calculation that the establishment of a NATO installation on Polish territory, would increase its importance in the Alliance. the former Polish Minister of Defense explained the decision by emphasizing the importance of Poland's geographical location and expressed the desire that Poland become part of the common defense system.<sup>116</sup>

Poland's NATO membership solved Polish security dilemma. Poland had found itself in the security situation never experienced before. For the first time in her history, she had strong allies, which, when necessary, would come with assistance. Among Polish political elites, exists a belief that Poland owes its

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<sup>113</sup> M. Zaborowski, From America's Protégé to Constructive European. Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century. *Occasional Papers*, No. 56, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2004, pp. 17-19.

<sup>114</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 127.

<sup>115</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 126-127.

<sup>116</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 127.

membership in the Atlantic Alliance to the U.S. administration. In fact, the administration of President Bill Clinton strongly supported pro-American Poland in the run for membership in the Alliance.<sup>117</sup> Hence, considering these factors it was very probable that Polish appreciation would go further beyond words in the future.

#### **B. GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

Transatlantic relations deteriorated after the end of the Cold War. However, bad the condition of relations throughout the 1990s, the real crisis came after the events of the 9/11.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought sympathy and support of the nations around the globe for the United States. For the brief period, just after 9/11, it seemed that transatlantic relations would have its renaissance. The disputes between Atlantic allies calmed down, leaving center stage to Alliance unity. The solidarity of the allies against terrorism was perceived as a critical element of the cohesion of the Atlantic Alliance in the future.<sup>118</sup>

Enthusiasm among the coalition against terrorism, which was visible before and during war in Afghanistan, did not last long. Not more than half a year later the divide among allies became even more visible. It was a result of several factors such as the personality of new American president George W. Bush, U.S. unilateralism versus European multilateralism, the new U.S. security strategy, and the debate over Iraq. Those differences between allies nearly destroyed transatlantic relations. It became evident that it was the end of the transatlantic relations as we knew them.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> For further information on Clinton's administration support for Poland's NATO membership see: R. D. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. Columbia University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 214-221.

<sup>118</sup> P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 1. Also L. S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: the Evolution of an Alliance*. Praeger, Westport, 2004, pp. 134-135.

<sup>119</sup> M. Zaborowski, Poland and Transatlantic Relations in the Twenty-First Century. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn, *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 125.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were perceived by the United States as the *casus belli*. It led to the invoking of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Article 5 was designed for the purpose of the common defense of the Alliance, and had never been used before. The European allies responded according to the terms of Article 5.<sup>120</sup> The allies dispatched early warning airborne centers (AWACS) to patrols along U.S. coast and froze bank accounts believed to belong to terrorist organizations.<sup>121</sup>

However, as cooperation within the Alliance seemed to bloom in early weeks after 9/11 the first cracks on the surface of the cohesion of NATO appeared. Some like Jeffrey Lantis even suggest that “allied cooperation after September 11 was running mainly on policy momentum left over from the Cold War and not a fundamental reorientation and new consensus on foreign policy direction.”<sup>122</sup>

Growing differences between the United States and Europe over the threat perception and the way to deal with it turned initial enthusiasm among allies into annoyance with each other. For the United States, it was terrorism that posed the primary threat to its security. Whereas European allies, most of them already having dealt with terrorism on their soil, were focused on economic,

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120 The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of the individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Washington DC, 4 April 1949. in *NATO Handbook*. NATO Office of Information and Press, Brussels, 2001, p. 528.

121 P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 63. Also in: J. S. Lantis, American Perspectives on the Transatlantic Security Agenda. In: K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 186.

122 J. S. Lantis, American Perspectives on the Transatlantic Security Agenda. In: K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 186.

ethnic, ecological and religious problems in their countries, and did not perceive terrorism as a major threat.<sup>123</sup>

Moreover, Americans were annoyed by the slowness of decision-making process of the Alliance<sup>124</sup>, as well as by the lack of adequate capabilities.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, the United States decided to pursue the idea of a “coalition of the willing,” which meant to form “coalitions defined by the mission” from outside of NATO. This new approach of the U.S. administration to conducting the war on terrorism became apparent in the wake of *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan, but it was not wholly comprehended yet by the Europeans.<sup>126</sup> It was expressed later in the new U.S. Security Strategy.

The operation against the terrorist network Al Qaeda and Taliban regime in Afghanistan began on October 2001. The NATO allies offered their resources to help fight terrorism within a coalition led by the Americans. However, although they were willing to assist their senior ally and share the burden of the war, the allies wanted to have a voice in the decisions on how this war would be conducted. Such an arrangement was not on U.S. agenda.<sup>127</sup> Instead, the United States focused on the countries which did not necessarily share their liberal and

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<sup>123</sup> J. S. Lantis, American Perspectives on the Transatlantic Security Agenda. In: K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 186-187.

<sup>124</sup> In American perspective, the NATO support in previous operation in Kosovo was not only unnecessary, but counterproductive. For more information regarding this issue see: P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, pp. 63-64.

<sup>125</sup> The problem with the capability gap between the United States and its European allies became apparent in 1991 Gulf War, but the most evident example of this issue was the NATO war in Kosovo where the United States provided overwhelming majority of assets during this operation. For further information regarding this issue see: J. S. Lantis, American Perspectives on the Transatlantic Security Agenda. In: K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 187.

<sup>126</sup> M. Zaborowski, Poland and Transatlantic Relations in the Twenty-First Century. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn, *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 124.

<sup>127</sup> P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 63. Also in: J. S. Lantis, American Perspectives on the Transatlantic Security Agenda. In: K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 187.

democratic worldview, such as Russia, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.

Being consistent with its policy toward the United States, Poland wanted to show that it was a valuable ally, even if that means support for U.S. unilateral action. Poland was among the first nations that decided to share the burden of the operation in Afghanistan and supported the United States militarily and politically. President George W. Bush accepted Polish symbolic help with enthusiasm.<sup>128</sup>

One outcome of the new American policy of “coalitions of the willing” became worrisome for Poland. It was the fact that the United States was looking for allies who preferred to use military power as a primary tool of foreign policy. Although Poland appreciated the usefulness of solving problems using military power, the selection of these new allies worried Poland. In other words, the rising importance of the U.S.-Russian relationship and the position of Russia in the coalition against terrorism were perceived in Poland as a potential threat to its security.<sup>129</sup>

Russia emerged as a primary U.S. ally in the war on terrorism. Previously, Russia was constrained by the conditions under which she was receiving economic help from the Western countries. These conditions included democratic reforms and “good behavior” in relations with its neighbors. Now that Russia was such an important actor in the coalition, President Putin could neglect some of those conditions, and even gain additional support such as recognizing Chechen rebels as terrorist. Moreover, Russia hardened its position

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<sup>128</sup> Polish government decided to dispatch 300 military personnel to the region. For more information see: O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, pp. 128-129.

<sup>129</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 129.

in the relations with its neighbors, particularly Poland and Baltic States, which in the longer run endangered future NATO enlargement.<sup>130</sup>

The events of September 11 and the publication of the new U.S. National Security Strategy in 2002 have changed transatlantic relations. Acting unilaterally, the United States endangered relations with its traditional allies. Moreover, seeking “coalitions of the willing” outside of the Alliance, especially among the countries that did not share its democratic values created an atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty about America’s intentions. America’s traditional allies became subjected to the role of providers of post-conflict reconstruction and stability.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

Since 1999, Poland had enjoyed the status of a U.S. close ally. It was even strengthened after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, when Poland was one of the first to respond to the U.S. call for a global war on terrorism in several ways. First, by hosting an international conference on terrorism just after 9/11, in which president George W. Bush took part via satellite link.<sup>131</sup> Second, by sending troops to fight terrorist networks in Afghanistan. And finally, by providing political support for any U.S. action.

On the one hand, the United States helped Poland in its development and levered its position in Europe in several ways. First, by providing strong support for Poland’s membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, for which Poland was greatly appreciative and which Poland would never forget. Second, the President of the United States pronounced Poland as a regional power and a representative of U.S. policy and interest in Central and Eastern Europe. Additionally, the United States supported Poland in her efforts for integration with the structures of the European Union.

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<sup>130</sup> K. H. Kamp, The Dynamics of NATO Enlargement. In: A. Lieven, D. Trenin, *Ambivalent Neighbors. The EU, NATO, and the Price of Membership*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2003, pp. 197-198.

<sup>131</sup> Warsaw Conference on Combating Terrorism. Biuro Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego (Office of National Security), Warsaw, November 6, 2001.

[http://www.bbn.gov.pl/?strona=pl\\_kronika\\_2001\\_11\\_0601](http://www.bbn.gov.pl/?strona=pl_kronika_2001_11_0601); (Accessed November 27, 2005).

The time between 1999 and 2003 became the most intensive and successful period in U.S.-Polish relations. Poland received the status of close ally to the United States and as a result also received significant support. U.S. support also helped to increase Poland's position on international stage.

The United States, on the other hand, gained a reliable and loyal ally. Driven by the fear of Russian resurgence, Polish security policy was formulated around doing everything possible to maintain the status of America's closest ally.

It must be understood that Poland is not a country the United States considers as indispensable for protecting America's vital interests. Although the United States would not sacrifice its more valuable relations (i.e. with France, Germany, or United Kingdom) for the sake of relations with Poland, Poland has become a reliable and trusted partner, whose unequivocal support for U.S. actions has been important in these difficult days for the United States.

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#### **IV. POLAND – DISAPPOINTED FRIEND 2003-2005**

The years 2003-2005 have been very important for U.S.-Polish relations. The main issues that occupied Polish foreign policy after 2002 were Poland's support for the U.S.-led invasion on Iraq, and finalization of Polish accession to the European Union.

However disputes over Iraq and Saddam Hussein's regime among Atlantic allies was a new situation that emerged after September 11, as a result of earlier problems within the Alliance. In the first place, the American unilateral approach to the war on terrorism was not consistent with European traditional multilateralism. Secondly, the introduction of a new American security strategy with the concept of "coalitions of the willing" left European allies with the feeling of abandonment, which further led to the loosening of transatlantic ties. Lastly, America's European allies, in particular France, after brief a period of solidarity and cooperation just after the attacks on World Trade Center of September 11, returned to their traditional anti-Americanism.

In this environment, in 2002 Poland's foreign policy outlined two main priorities for the coming years. These objectives were expressed by Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, then Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs:

In light of the changing circumstances the foreign policy of the Government of the Republic of Poland will acknowledge the following premises in the program for 2002 and the successive years: Firstly – the need of continuity with regard to the strategic priorities of this policy in the scope of Euro-Atlantic issues and the integration with the European Union....<sup>132</sup>

In other words, the priorities of Polish policy were: to support U.S. actions against Iraq and to negotiate the best possible conditions for Poland before accession in 2004.

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<sup>132</sup> Exposé by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, to the Diet of the Republic of Poland on the Main Lines of Polish Foreign Policy in 2002. Warsaw, March 14, 2002. *Zbior Dokumentow – Dokumenty z Zakresu Polityki Zagranicznej Polski i Stosunkow Miedzynarodowych*. Warsaw, 2002, No. 1. <http://www.zbiordokumentow.pl/2002/1/ZD1-02%202006.pdf>; (Accessed November 27, 2005).

Poland's support for the United States and its integration into the European Union are two linked matters of Polish statecraft. Whereas the former is the result of Poland's security guarantees, the latter is mostly driven by economic considerations. Indeed, both those issues are interrelated and have impact on each other. The main problem is that Poland wanted to satisfy two opposite directions in its foreign policy – to be a good U.S. ally and to be a good European, without betraying either.

This chapter examines the Polish government decision to support the United States in its war against Iraq, as well as the impact of the strong relationship with the United States on Poland's EU membership. This chapter also explains the disappointment expressed by the Polish public opinion and political elites with the U.S.-Polish relations.

#### **A. POLAND'S SUPPORT OF THE WAR ON IRAQ**

The decision to support U.S. action against Iraq was one of the most important and probably the most difficult decisions for Polish government since 1989. It was a choice that could change the position of Poland on the international stage. It was also a decision that could alienate Poland within the European Union at the time when the accession negotiations were heading for finalization by the beginning of 2004.

##### **1. The “Axis of Evil” and the “Coalition of the Willing”**

The events of September 11, 2001, seemed to galvanize the Atlantic allies to hold the same view on the problem of terrorism. This element had the possibility of revitalizing transatlantic relations, such as those between the United States and France. However, the outcome was quite the contrary.

Despite the great support the United States achieved from its European allies, America decided to act unilaterally. In other words, America welcomed any support from other countries, but reserved the leadership and decision-making process for itself. Earlier disagreements between transatlantic allies over U.S.

rejection of the Kyoto Agreement in 2001,<sup>133</sup> genetically modified food,<sup>134</sup> the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty,<sup>135</sup> and International Criminal Court<sup>136</sup> were colored by the 9/11 events, which gave great opportunity for the United States to renegotiate these issues. Unfortunately for transatlantic relations, it was not on the agenda of President George W. Bush's administration. Hence, the United States sustained its stance toward these issues, which irritated America's European allies.

The first signs of American unilateralism were visible during operations in Afghanistan, but were mainly ignored by international public. Many felt that Americans were better prepared to this kind of operation and provided most of the assets to this operation, hence, U.S. leadership was understandable and acceptable. In January 2002, President George W. Bush introduced America's new superpower worldview in his State of the Union Address. This address revealed the depth of American unilateralism.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Formal name: *Kyoto Protocol to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change*. The agreement between the signatories on limitation of emission of greenhouse gases. The United States rejected the Agreement in 2001. Source: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.html>. (Accessed November 27, 2005). For further information regarding the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change, visit: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>.

<sup>134</sup> The disagreement over the Genetically Modified Food (or Organisms) (GMO) between the United States and Europe exist as long as the existence of such food. Since the European Union introduced series of regulations on GMO and the United States not, the European Union require proper labeling of such products. For more information regarding the GMO visit: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biotechnology/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/food/biotechnology/index_en.htm); (Accessed November 27, 2005)

<sup>135</sup> The Treaty was signed by the Soviet Union and the United States on May 26, 1972. On December 13, 2001, President of the United States announced the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Source: M. Perez-Rivas, *US Quits ABM Treaty*. CNN.com, December 14, 2001. <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/12/13/rec.bush.abm/>; (Accessed November 27, 2005).

<sup>136</sup> The International Criminal Court was established by the Rome Statute on July 17, 1998, and entered into force on July 1, 2002. "The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first ever permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to promote the rule of law and ensure that the gravest international crimes do not go unpunished." The International Criminal Court website: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/about.html>. Accessed on November 27, 2005. The United States insisted on exclusion of American nationals from the jurisdiction of this court. L. S. Kaplan, *NATO Divided, NATO United: The Evolution of an Alliance*. Praeger, Westport, 2004, pp. 140-41.

<sup>137</sup> President Delivers State of the Union Address. The White House, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2002. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>; (Accessed November 27, 2005).

The address frightened America's European allies. The "axis of evil" pronouncement revealed the most probable course of action for the United States and meant that Afghanistan would not satisfy the United States' aspirations. Here traditional European multilateralism and pacifism clashed with American unilateralism and growing militarism over the way to deal with security crises.

This was the case when the United States prepared itself to topple the rogue state of Iraq. Although, the United States tried to use the United Nations to legitimize its future action against Saddam Hussein's regime by forcing the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1441, it announced that it would act even without the UNSC approval.<sup>138</sup>

After the resolution draft had been trimmed and adjusted to the final version, which overcame opposition from France and Russia, the United Nations Security Council approved Resolution 1441 unanimously.<sup>139</sup> Although the Resolution represented a successful reconciliation among the Security Council members on the Iraq case, its ambiguity was used by Saddam Hussein to divide the UNSC members by not fully complying with the requirements of 1441.<sup>140</sup>

In America's eyes, Iraqi non-compliance with the UNSC Resolution automatically triggered military action against Iraq. The other UNSC members and some U.S. allies, namely France, Russia and Germany, did not share this view. In this situation, the United States decided that it would act militarily even without support of its allies.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 118.

<sup>139</sup> *Security Council Holds Iraq In 'Material Breach' Of Disarmament Obligations, Offers Final Chance To Comply, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1441* (2002). Security Council 4464<sup>th</sup> Meeting (AM), Press Release SC/7564, New York, 2002, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7564.doc.htm>; (Accessed November 27, 2005) Also in: P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 115.

<sup>140</sup> P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 114.

<sup>141</sup> P. H. Gordon, J. Shapiro, *Allies at War. America, Europe, and the Crisis Over Iraq*. Brookings, New York, 2004, p. 116.

Any remaining doubts about American unilateralism were dismissed by the publication of the U.S. National Security Strategy in September 2002. the centerpiece of this strategy was the concept of “coalitions of the willing,” which was seen by the Europeans as a threat to the cohesion and relevance of NATO. In other words, the Europeans feared that the United States would seek allies among countries which did not necessarily share its liberal democratic values, but could share its priorities, namely Russia, China, India, or other pseudo-democratic countries.<sup>142</sup> These worries were not without reason. The new U.S. National Security Strategy says that “the mission defines the coalition” and that the coalitions must be flexible accepting the countries outside of the Atlantic Alliance.<sup>143</sup> The U.S. National Security Strategy is the natural continuation of the policy introduced by the President George W. Bush in his State of the Union Address. The next step in such a policy was the military resolution of the conflict with Iraq. If such a policy were pursued, consecutive countries from “axis of evil” would face U.S. military intervention.

## **2. Decision of Polish Government to Send Troops to Iraq**

A decision to go to war along with the United States was crucial for the Polish government. However, it was a dangerous decision to make in light of the current situation. Poland undertook this decision on the eve of its EU accession, contrary to the position of the two leading EU nations, France and Germany. French President Jacques Chirac expressed his disappointment with the Letter of Eight<sup>144</sup> in very harsh words and reprimanded the nations who signed it. This criticism was especially critical of the three candidate states, which signed the letter (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland). Chirac described the behavior

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<sup>142</sup> K. Archick, *The United States and Europe: Possible Options for US Policy*. CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, March 8, 2005, p. 13.

<sup>143</sup> *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. White House, Washington D.C., 2002.

<sup>144</sup> “The Letter of Eight” was a memorandum signed by the eight European leaders of Spain, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Portugal, supporting President of the United States, George W. Bush, The memorandum was published in *The Wall Street Journal* on January 30, 2003. M. Champion, European Leaders Declare Support for US on Iraq – Letter from Eight Countries Isolates France, Germany, Smooths Path for War. *The Wall Street Journal*. New York, January 30, 2003, p. A1.

of these states as “infantile” and “dangerous,” and called their action a “missed opportunity to shut up.”<sup>145</sup>

The reasons for the Polish government’s decision to support the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq were deeply rooted in Polish security. Poland’s decision to go to war against Iraq was not a response to a direct threat from the Saddam Hussein regime. The decision was a result of solidarity and loyalty to Poland’s security guarantor – the United States. It was a result of the view that if Poland shows its solidarity to its ally, the ally will come with assistance when Poland is in danger.<sup>146</sup> This way of thinking is distinctive for Polish security culture. Although having experienced unreliable allies in its history, Poland nevertheless always expressed its commitment and readiness to defend and help its allies. “For freedom yours and ours” was a motto of Polish soldiers fighting with allies defending and liberating another countries during WWII, while its allies were saying that they “will not die for Danzig” in September 1939. Poland was determined never to disappoint an ally in need.<sup>147</sup>

Poland’s support for the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq was a rational consequence of its commitment to become America’s closest ally. Poland identifies itself as an integral part of the Atlantic Alliance, whose success, in the view of Poles, is based on U.S. presence and leadership. Hence, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, were perceived in Poland as an “attack on all.” This was consistent with the post-9/11 spirit of solidarity among Atlantic allies and the invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Poland simply felt obliged to support its major ally.

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<sup>145</sup> H. Chu, Showdown with Iraq; News Analysis; Europe is Taking a Prewar Hit; Disagreement on Iraq Reveals a Power Struggle over Which Countries Should Lead the Region. *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles, February 19, 2003, p. A1.

<sup>146</sup> M. Zaborowski, From America’s Protégé to Constructive European. Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century. *Occasional Papers*, No. 56, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2004, pp. 11-13.

<sup>147</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 129.

Poland's desire to show its reliability as an ally, ready to act and support its words with actions, led to the decision to dispatch a relatively small special operation unit to the war in Iraq.<sup>148</sup> This symbolic gesture from the Polish government meant more than might be obvious on the surface. Spain and Italy, two countries that supported the U.S.-led coalition, did not send any forces to Iraq while the war was in progress.

Another reason for Polish support for the United States in its war on Iraq, was an expectation of benefits from the U.S. side. The reasons, initially of little importance for Polish decision-makers, grew in significance later, when the occupation and reconstruction of Iraq began.

Reconstruction of destroyed Iraqis infrastructure by Polish companies, rearmament of the new Iraqi army by Polish defense industry, and access to cheaper oil, combined with the expected realization of U.S. offset agreement of F-16 purchase, were the main economic benefits Poles expected from the United States for the participation of Polish soldiers in the Iraq war and stabilization efforts.

Aside from economic benefits, Poles expected that the U.S.'s strict visa requirement would be removed. Poland believed that being America's closest ally and strategic partner, second only to the Great Britain, was enough to change immigration rules for Polish nationals. On the contrary, after 9/11, obtaining a visa was even more difficult.<sup>149</sup>

The above-mentioned expectations are the main sources of Polish disappointment. These arguments were used by opposition politicians in Poland to show that sending troops to Iraq and maintaining strong relation with the United States significant policy mistakes of the Polish government and president. Opposition politicians stress that Poland did not benefit from its participation in

<sup>148</sup> O. Osica, Poland: A New European Atlanticist at a Crossroads. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 131.

<sup>149</sup> M. Zaborowski, From America's Protégé to Constructive European. Polish Security Policy in the Twenty-First Century. *Occasional Papers*, No. 56, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2004, p. 13.

the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq, and claim that Poles should be given at least the same visa privileges as France, Germany, and Great Britain.

Although these arguments did not influence the decision to send Polish soldiers to Iraq, their importance grew when President Aleksander Kwasniewski, while on a visit to the United States in 2005, received a negative answer to his request for the removal of the visa requirement.

Such pro-American scholars as Zbigniew Lewicki, chairman of the American Studies Department at the University of Warsaw, spoke out against members of the opposition, advocating a policy for trading U.S. visas and Iraq reconstruction contracts for support. Lewicki argued that conditioning the decision whether to stay or to withdraw from Iraq on the visa-restriction removal was ridiculous and merely an attempt by the opposition to humiliate the government on the international stage. He also stated that Poland had benefited politically from the close relationship with the United States, and that Poland's status as a U.S. strategic partner helped Poland lever its position in Europe.<sup>150</sup>

Although the arguments of Polish Europeanists and Atlanticists diverge over the decision by Poland to support operations in Iraq, they agree that that decision strongly influenced Poland's relations both with the European Union as a whole and with particular members.

## **B. IMPACT OF U.S.-POLISH RELATIONS ON POLAND'S EU MEMBERSHIP**

Poland's EU membership and its relations with the United States seem to be separate issues. This is not the case, if one considers the individual decisions that determined the direction of Polish foreign policy, Poland's support for the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, and its stance in debates on the EU constitution. This chapter will explore the impact of U.S.-Polish relations on Poland's EU membership.

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<sup>150</sup> A. Lompart, Miedzy Europa a Ameryka: Rozmowa z Prof. Zbigniewem Lewickim, dyrektorem Osrodka Studiow Amerykanskich na UW, o Polsce, Stanach Zjednoczonych i Unii Europejskiej. *Universytet Warszawski*, Warszawa, June 2004, No. 3(19), pp. 5-8.

One of Poland's goals in pursuing close relations with the United States was to improve its position on the international stage. Prior to its EU accession, Poland attempted to negotiate certain conditions that would strengthen its international importance. Poland wanted to enter the European Union as a regional power that would be indispensable for the European Union's implementation of its policies regarding the Eastern European region.

The question was: Did the European Union need Poland as a link with Eastern Europe? In some cases, the answer was yes, but not in the case of the EU's relations with Russia and Belarus. The reason is this: traditionally, countries like France and Germany had maintained better relations with Russia than Poland had, and Russia did not accept Poland's position as a regional leader, especially as it was championed by the United States.

Though Poland maintained good relations with Russia throughout the 1990s, the NATO and EU enlargements combined with the events of 9/11 resulted in a major breach between the two countries. This recent crisis in Polish-Russian relations has revealed its weaknesses, as well as Russia's attempts to decrease Poland's importance both in the region and in the European Union. First, Russia joined Germany in the efforts to build a natural gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea that would encompass not only Polish territory but also the territories of the three Baltic states. Second, Russia recently changed a national holiday that celebrated the October Revolution to a holiday that celebrates the end of the Polish occupation of the Kremlin in the seventeenth century, a deliberate attempt to humiliate Poland.<sup>151</sup> Historical events like the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, the Katyn massacre, and the September 17, 1939, Soviet aggression also continue to overshadow relations between the two countries.

However, some of the Poland's actions have also contributed to the ongoing friction. For example, Poland tried to exercise pressure on Russia, using the United States to force Russia to acknowledge the crimes committed by the Soviet Union under Stalin. Moreover, the inflammatory actions of some Polish

<sup>151</sup> R. Bernstein, S. Kishkovsky, J. Dempsey, After Centuries of Enmity, Relations Between Poland and Russia Are as Bad as Ever. *The New York Times*, New York, July 3, 2005, p. 1.4.

politicians also undermine the possibility of more amiable relations. In 2005, for instance. Lech Kaczynski, then mayor of Warsaw, named a street in the capital city after the late Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev.<sup>152</sup>

In contrast to its poor relations with Russia, Poland enjoys very good relations with Ukraine, relations that are strongly supported by the United States, which depends on Polish experts to direct U.S. assistance to Ukraine. The United States also supports military cooperation between these countries, especially the formation of a Polish-Ukrainian battalion designated as a peacekeeping force.<sup>153</sup>

Although the European Union has long viewed a strong U.S.-Polish partnership as a threat to its cohesion, the European Union praised Poland for its strong relations with Ukraine, which helped prevent a major crisis there during the 2004 presidential election. During the so-called Orange Revolution, Poland and the European Union joined in mediation efforts to resolve the election standoff.<sup>154</sup>

U.S.-Polish relations have also strongly influenced Poland's position on the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), which Poland was not in favor. However, it supports its central concept and will dispatch troops if necessary as long as the ESDP does nothing that endangers the continuation of a U.S. presence in Europe and, as a consequence, Poland's security.

One aspect of Poland's EU position, its stance in the EU constitution debate was *not* a result of Polish Atlanticism, but rather was motivated by Poland's aspirations to be an influential regional actor. Polish support for

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<sup>152</sup> Dookola Dudajewa. *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Warszawa, March 23, 2005, p. 8.

<sup>153</sup> D. H. Dunn, Poland: America's New Model Ally. In M. Zaborowski, D. H. Dunn. *Poland: A New Power in Transatlantic Security*. Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003, p. 71.

<sup>154</sup> D. Williams, Ukrainian Town Basking in the 'Orange' Afterglow; Westernized Lviv Supplied People and Spirit to the Protest in Kiev. *The Washington Post*. Washington D.C., December 15, 2004, p. A20.

maintaining the terms of the Nice Treaty, however, did reveal the influence of U.S.-Polish relations.<sup>155</sup>

Poland was not the only state to oppose the change of the Nice system. Spain, another member of the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, supported Poland's opposition. However, after Spain changed governments in 2004 and withdrew its support for the coalition, it also abandoned Poland in its fight for a European constitution based on the Nice system.<sup>156</sup>

Some countries view the proposed change in the voting weight of the individual countries in the new EU constitution as an attempt to decrease the importance of the newest members, most of whom are Atlanticist-oriented. This change in the decision making process favors the two lead nations and original EU members, in particular, France and Germany.

### C. CONCLUSIONS

The U.S. decision to invade Iraq in 2003 was a turning point in U.S.-Polish relations, marking a new approach to the relationship within the Polish political establishment. However, given the current situation in Iraq, some of Poland's political elites no longer unequivocally support U.S. actions. Their initial excitement and admiration changed to disappointment largely because of the way the Americans conducted the Iraq operation. As a result, their strong support for the unilateral military action also decreased. The Polish populace's and the media's opposition raised questions about the government's decision to send Polish troops to Iraq, especially after the Polish contingent suffered its first combat casualty.

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<sup>155</sup> The Nice Treaty was an amendment to the Treaty of European Union preparing it to the coming enlargement. The agreement was achieved in 2001 and was favor by then candidate states, Poland in particular, especially the changes to the vote weighting. For more information on the Nice Treaty see: Treaty of Nice: Amending the Treaty of European Union, the Treaties Establishing European Communities, and Certain Related Acts. in *Official Journal of the European Communities*. 2001/C, March 10, 2001.

<sup>156</sup> J. Sedivy, M. Zaborowski, Old Europe, New Europe, and Transatlantic Relations. In K. Longhurst, M. Zaborowski, *Old Europe, New Europe and the Transatlantic Security Agenda*. Routledge, New York, 2005, p. 17.

Many in the Polish media question the benefits of Poland's participation in the so-called Iraqi Adventure. Skeptics contended that Poland was tricked into joining by promises of Iraq reconstruction contracts that never materialized. The opposition's main complaint, however, is that, despite Poland's strong support and commitment to the U.S.-led coalition, Polish citizens still need visas to enter the United States and those visas are increasingly difficult to get. The bitterness surrounding this issue is significantly exacerbated by the fact that the French and Germans, anti-American as they are, can travel easily to the United States – without visas.

But it was the U.S. mistreatment of the captives in the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay prisons that finally consolidated the opposition within Polish society to the hegemonic behavior of the United States in general, and to President George W. Bush in particular.<sup>157</sup>

Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 brought the question of Poland's distinctive Atlanticism to the fore, as some European leaders doubted whether Poland could be both a staunch supporter of the United States and a loyal EU member. Although Poland's support for the United States and its EU membership are separate manifestations of Polish foreign policy, they strongly influence each other.

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<sup>157</sup> *Reelekcja George'a W. Busha i Postawy Wobec Stanow Zjednoczonych.* Komunikat z Badan BS/12/2005, Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej, Warsaw, 2005.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### A. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

After 1989 Poland's security and political situation posed challenges of an unprecedented nature. The lack of security guaranties, in particular, forced Poland to change direction and to develop new foreign and security policies. The termination of the Warsaw Pact created the need for either a new alliance or membership in the existing one, NATO. Poland, therefore, faced with the transformation of the old security system and the consequential need for economic reforms, was highly vulnerable to external threats.

Much of the external threat came from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and crises in Eastern Europe. Poland viewed the instability of the political and economic systems in its neighboring countries as a danger. To Poles, the danger resembled the historic events in Poland in 1939.

In its search for security guaranties, Poland turned toward NATO, its members' only guarantor of peace and security, the pillar of Western European security. As early as 1990, Poland devoted its efforts to integration with the Atlantic Alliance. However, for Poland, integration with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was only a means to achieve the status of a U.S. ally.

To Poland, the United States, with its unrivaled military and economic superiority, was critical to NATO's existence. As seen from the Polish perspective, the United States had been the guarantor of Western European security for the entire post-WWII period. This viewpoint meant that the United States was the only power that could possibly guarantee Poland's security. The Polish political leaders understood that, within NATO, a U.S. decision to accept new members would be the final decision; thus, "everything depended on the United States and its will."

Poland demonstrated its dedication to achieving this goal by engaging in several actions led by the United States and NATO: Operation Desert Storm in 1991, Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti in 1994, and the Implementation

Forces (IFOR) and Stabilization Forces (SFOR) in the Balkans. Poland's participation in these operations helped create an image of Poland as a reliable, loyal ally, ready to support its words with action.

The opportunity to show such dedication to the Alliance came during the Kosovo War, which arose just after Poland became a NATO member. Unlike the other two new NATO members, the Czech Republic and Hungary, Poland did not hesitate to support the war effort with ground troops. Poles did not forget the United States' support for Poland's integration efforts. So when the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001, by Al-Qaeda terrorists, Poland was among the first to respond to the U.S. call to fight a war on terrorism. Moreover, Poland strongly supported NATO's invocation of the terms of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Poland unequivocally joined the U.S.-led coalition to fight terrorism anywhere in the world. It understood and agreed that, as the only superpower in the world, the United States, with its superior military power, should lead the war coalition. Despite strong opposition from France and Germany to the United States' unilateral approach to solving the terrorism problem, Poland remained an ardent supporter. The situation became even more difficult when the U.S. war on Iraq started. It was also the eve of Poland's EU accession.

Poland became a victim of the transatlantic crisis. Indebted to the United States for its support during the process of its NATO accession, Poland now also felt obliged to the alliance. Although Poland had close relations with the United States, its geographical location also influenced the course of Polish foreign policy. Hence, maintaining good relations with its neighbors and behaving as a good European state became top priorities in Poland's international relations.

The Polish strategic community distrusted the EU as a sole security provider. The view that persisted among the members was that only the United States could provide relevant security guarantees for Poland. Poland's support for the United States when it was in need would yield a similar reaction from the United States when Poland was in danger. The main driver of U.S.-Polish relations continues to be security.

However, the security-related aspects of U.S.-Polish relations are seen differently by the two countries. For Poland, they are related to a direct threat; for the United States, it is about burden-shifting, burden-sharing, and political support, all of which increase U.S. security.

## B. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The current situation in Europe and the state of transatlantic relations are unfavorable to Poland. Its staunch support for the United States garnered criticism from such “old” European states as France. Relations with Russia are worse than a decade ago. Therefore, Poland needs to adjust its foreign policy in ways that heal its relations with those countries. To mend the relationships within the Atlantic community and with Russia, all the players need to reconsider their position and be flexible in dealing with contentious issues.

The United States should revise its unilateral approach to international problems and engage in peaceful debates over these issues. It would be more beneficial for all sides of the transatlantic partnership if the United States let its allies share in the burden of decision-making processes. The United States should also take under consideration Poland’s dilemma and its sacrifices, as well as its dedication to its allies, and reward its long-lasting friend and supporter compensation for Poland’s losses in transatlantic crisis.

To keep Poland and Polish public opinion on its side, the United States must reconsider its *divide et impera* approach in dealing with allies. It is important that the U.S. administration review issues relevant to Poland, such as the U.S. visa requirements and greater economic assistance.

Poland needs to revise and enhance its relations with Russia. Poland will no doubt be increasingly engaged in EU affairs, but its role must be changed. To achieve these goals and to become more than merely the land in between (*Mittteleuropa*) Russia and Germany, the Polish leadership must revise Poland’s foreign policy toward its eastern neighbors. In sum, Poland will remain a close ally to the United States for security reasons. This will not soon change because

there is currently no alternative. However, for economic reasons, Poland must enhance its position as an influential player among the European countries also.

Despite recent events in Polish politics such as the victory of the right wing in its recent presidential and parliamentary elections, Poland will most likely remain on its current course in terms of its foreign policy. However, the overall impact of these electoral events on Polish foreign policy is hard to predict at this time.

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